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اَللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۙ يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ؕ

القران الحكيم ٢:٢٥٨

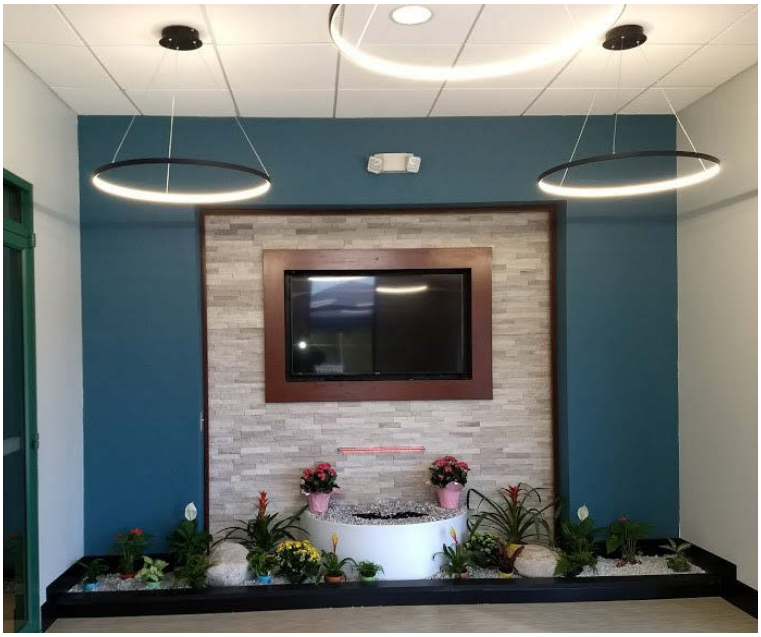
The Ahmadiyya GAZETTE USA

July-August 2018

Naib Ameer and Missionary Incharge USA, Imam Azhar Hanif,
Presiding a session of East Coast Qur'an Conference-2018

AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian



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Ahmadiyya Gazette USA

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Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

sa/s:	Ṣallallāhu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (may peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)
as/a:	'Alaihis-Salām (may peace be upon him)
ra:	Raḍiyallāhu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allāh be pleased with him/her)
rh:	Raḥimahullāhu Ta'ālā (may Allāh shower His mercy on him)
aba:	Ayyadahullāhu Ta'ālā Bi-Naṣrihil-'Azīz (may Allāh support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'ān count Tasmiya at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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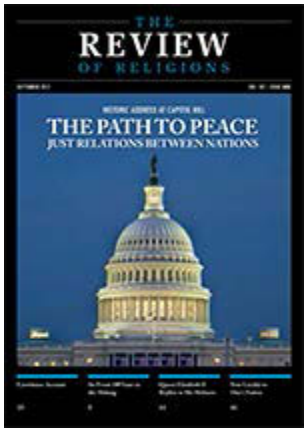

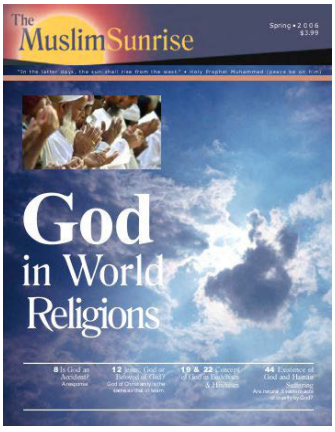

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The Pilgrimage to House of God

اَلْحَجُّ اَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُوْمٰتٌ ۚ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيْهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَ لَا فُسُوْقَ ۙ وَ لَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ ؕ وَ مَا تَفْعَلُوْا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
يَّعْلَمْهُ اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ تَزَوَّدُوْا فَاِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوٰى ۫ وَ اتَّقُوْنِ يٰۤاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ

Translation: The months of the Ḥajj are well known; so whoever determines to perform the Pilgrimage in these months, should remember that there is to be no foul talk, nor any transgression, nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And furnish yourselves with necessary provisions, and surely the best provision is righteousness. And fear Me alone, O men of understanding. (2[Al-Baqarah]: 198)

Commentary: The clause, the months of the Ḥajj are well known, is intended to hint that in the matter of the time of Pilgrimage the Quran gives no new commandment. The established custom is the right one, being rightly retained by the Arabs from the days of Abraham and Ishmael. The three lunar months during which one may formally undertake the Pilgrimage and enter into the state of Ihram are Shawwal, Dhul-Qa'dah and the first ten days of Dhul-Ḥijjah (Bukhari).

The clause, there is to be no foul talk, nor any transgression nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage, does not means that these are necessary conditions for the completion of Pilgrimage, which would be like a soulless body if one indulged in such things while undertaking it. Another purpose underlying these injunctions is that a person should abstain from them particularly during the period of Pilgrimage so that it might become easy for him to shun these things at other times as well. The three vices selected are typical of what should be scrupulously avoided in a religious gathering like that at the Pilgrimage. *Rafath* stands for all fouls, immodest and lewd talk as well as acts relating to sex. *Fusūq* stands for transgression against the laws of God and disobedience of lawful authority, whether spiritual or temporal. And *Jidāl* stands for disputes and quarrels with co-travelers, companions and neighbors.

The clause, and furnish yourselves with necessary provisions, does not only refer to the preparations, which one makes for an ordinary journey which is necessary in its own way, but also to the preparations which one has to make for a spiritual journey. In this sense the clause would signify "provide yourselves with piety and righteousness;" and in order to emphasize the latter kind of provision, the Quran fittingly adds, and surely the best provision is righteousness. But ordinary provision is also necessary; for, if a man does not take necessary provisions with him, he will be certainly put to great inconvenience and hardship on the way and will have to beg of others for help and both these things are determined to the noble object underlying Pilgrimage,

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِيْ جَعَلْنٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَآءَ ۨ الْعَاكِفُ فِيْهِ وَ الْبَادِ ؕ
وَ مَنْ يُّرِدْ فِيْهِ بِاِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ

As to those who disbelieve, and hinder men from the way of Allah, and from the Sacred Mosque, which We have appointed equally for all men, be they dwellers therein or visitors from the desert, and whoso seeks wrongfully to deviate therein from the right path-We shall cause him to taste of a grievous punishment. (22[Al-Ḥajj]: 26)

ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوْا تَفَثَهُمْ وَ لْيُوْفُوْا نُذُوْرَهُمْ وَ لْيَطَّوَّفُوْا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيْقِ

Translation: Then let them accomplish their needful acts of cleansing, and fulfill their vows, and go around the Ancient House. (22[Al-Ḥajj]: 30)

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَ لَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَ لٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى مَا
هَدٰىكُمْ ؕ وَ بَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Translation: Their flesh reaches not Allah, nor does their blood, but it is your righteousness that reaches Him. Thus has He subjected them to you, that you may glorify Allah for His guiding you. And give glad tidings to those who do good. (22[Al-Ḥajj]: 38)

(The Holy Quran with English Translation and Commentary, a.k.a., Five Volume Commentary)

Guidance from the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa]

Aḥadīth About Ḥajj

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ خَطَبَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ " أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الْحَجَّ فَحُجُّوا " . فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ أَكُلَّ عَامٍ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ فَسَكَتَ حَتَّى قَالَهَا ثَلاَثًا فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " لَوْ قُلْتُ نَعَمْ لَوَجَبَتْ وَلَمَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ - ثُمَّ قَالَ - ذَرُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِكَثْرَةِ سُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلاَفِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ فَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِشَىْءٍ فَأْتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَىْءٍ فَدَعُوهُ "

(مسلم كتاب الحج باب فرض الحج مرة فى العمر)

Abu Hurairah, God be pleased with him, narrates that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, while delivering a sermon, stated: "o people! Allah has made the pilgrimage obligatory upon you. So you should perform it."

Hearing this a man asked, “Is it to be performed every year, o Prophet of Allah?” The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, kept silent. The man put his question three times. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then replied: "If I say 'yes', it would become obligatory, and you would not have the strength for that."

He continued, "Do not inquire about something so long as I do not tell you about it. Those before you were destroyed because they asked too many questions but disobeyed the prophets. When I command you to do something, you should perform it to the best of your ability. And if I forbid you to do something, you should abstain from it." (Muslim)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَنْ حَجَّ لِلّٰهِ فَلَمْ يَرْفُثْ وَ لَمْ يَفْسُقْ رَجَعَ كَيَوْمٍ وَ لَدَتْهُ اُمُّهُ-

(مشكوٰة كتاب المناسک)

Abu Hurairah, God be pleased with him, narrates that the Holy Prophet[sa], said: "When someone performs the pilgrimage for the sake of Allah, and does not indulge in foul talk or commit any transgression, he becomes as pure and innocent as the day his mother gave birth to him." (Mishkat)

(Selected sayings of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Islam International Publications Ltd., Qādiān, India, 2016).

In the words of the Promised Messiah[as]

The Institution of Ḥajj

Another form of worship is Ḥajj—the Pilgrimage; which does not mean that a person should carry out the formality of the Pilgrimage by providing for his journey across the ocean with money lawfully or unlawfully acquired, and having repeated the prayers and formulas according to the directions of the servitors of the Ka‘bah, should come back and boast that he has performed the Pilgrimage. The purpose that God Almighty has appointed for the Pilgrimage is not achieved in this manner. The truth is that the last stage of the seeker’s journey is that withdrawing himself altogether from the demands and desires of self he should be completely engulfed by the love of God and complete devotion to Him. A true lover sacrifices his soul and heart; and the circuit of the House of Allah is a visible sign of such a sacrifice. As there is a House of Allah here below on the earth, so there is one in heaven. Until a person performs the circuit of the House above, his circuit of the House below is not truly performed. One who performs the circuit of the House below puts aside all garments, retaining only one of them to cover his body, but he who performs the circuit of the House above discards all garments altogether and be- comes naked for the sake of God. The circuit is a sign of the lovers of God. They go around the Ka'ba as if they have no will of their own left and they are devoted wholly to Him. (Essence of Islam, Vol. II, p. 317)

Ḥajj – The Pilgrimage

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad[rh]

Another example, which demonstrates the universality of Islamic injunctions regarding the practice of religion, is the instance of Ḥajj—the pilgrimage. Once again one finds the institution of pilgrimage in all religions of the world, but the sites for pilgrimage are scattered at different places in one or more countries. One does not find a single central place which all the followers of a religion must visit at least once in their lifetime. Amazingly in Islam we find exactly such a place in Mecca, where Muslims from all over the world are expected to gather and spend about ten days entirely dedicated to the memory of God. The pilgrims come from all countries, all nations, all races and in all ages. Men, women and children, they all gather once a year for a fantastic rally, sometimes running into million. This grand display of universality is seen nowhere else in any other religion. Hence all these fingers which were raised in different areas of Islamic teaching, point to the same message of unification of man on earth under the Unity of God.

The institution of pilgrimage can be traced back to the time of Abraham peace be upon him. But there are very clear statements in the Quran describing it as an ancient institution, starting from times immemorial when the first House of God was built in Mecca. In the olden times, Mecca was pronounced Baka, so the Holy Quran refers to the first house as being built not in Mecca but in Bakā. It is also called Bait-ul-'Ateeq, or the most ancient house. Abraham raised it from the ruins, which he discovered under Divine guidance, and about which he was commissioned by God to rebuild with the help of his son Ishmael. It is the same place where he had left his wife Hagar and infant son Ishmael, again under Divine instruction. But work on the House of God awaited attention until Ishmael grew to an age where he could be of some help. So, both of them worked together to rebuild the house and restart the institution of pilgrimage.

Many rites performed during pilgrimage are rooted in those early days of the reconstruction of the House of God, and some even go beyond that. For instance, the running between Ṣafā and Marwah, two small hillocks close to the House of God, is done in memory of Hagar's search for some sign of human presence to help her and her child in their dire hour of need. The child is described as having become extremely restive with the agony of thirst, striking the earth with his heels in desperation. There, it is said, sprouted a fountain which still exists today in some form, and water in the well which was created later on around that spot, is considered to be a blessed water. Most of the pilgrims who perform the Ḥajj try to bring some water from there by way of blessing for their relatives and friends.

There are other rites and traditions which should be briefly explained. In Ḥajj, the pilgrims do not wear any sewn garments; rather, they dress in two loose sheets. This is further indicative of the tradition being most ancient. It indicates that the institution of Ḥajj began when man had not learnt to wear sewn clothes. They had only started to cover themselves. As such, it seems that it is in memory of those ancient people who used to circuit the first house built for the worship of God in that preliminary dress that the pilgrims are required to do the same. Again, the shaving of the head is an important feature which is also universally found as a symbol of dedication among monks, priests, hermits and vishnus. This further adds to the universality of its character. Women are exempt from shaving, but they have to symbolically cut their hair as a token. Also, in the places where Ḥaḍrat Abraham (may peace bee upon him) is known to have remembered God in the style of an intoxicated lover, and extolled his glory with loud chanting, the pilgrims are required to do the same at the same places. (Elementary Study of Islam, Islam International Publication Ltd., 2010, pp. 40 to 42.)

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Ten Days of Ḥajj

The fifth act of Islamic worship is the performing of the Ḥajj or the pilgrimage to Mecca. A Muslim must perform this pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime if economic and political conditions are favorable. The focal point of this pilgrimage is the Ka'ba, which was rebuilt by Prophet Abraham some 4,000 years ago. Today, the Ka'ba stands in the middle of a large courtyard of Masjid al Haram or the Sacred Mosque. The courtyard of Masjid al Haram contains, besides Ka'ba, the Maqam a Ibrahim and the fountain of Zamzam.

The Ḥajj is performed during the Muslim month of Dhul-Ḥijjah which comes two months after the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr. The various ceremonies of the Ḥajj include:

1. Entering into the state of ihram by wearing only two seamless white sheets. This is done by the pilgrims when they reach certain designated places called Meeqāt close to Mecca.

2. Saying of Talbiyah starting at the place where the ihram is worn. Talbiyah consists of saying aloud the following: Here we come, O God, here we come. No partner have You, here we come. Indeed, praise and blessings are Yours, and the Kingdom too. No partner have You, here we come

3. On entering Mecca, the pilgrims perform the first tawaf which consists of going around the Ka'ba seven times in an anticlockwise direction.

4. After completing the tawaf, the pilgrims perform the Sa'y which consists of running between the two little hills of Safa and Marwa located near the Ka'ba. These are the two hills where Hajirah ran in search of water when Prophet Abraham had to leave her there on Divine command.

5. After performing the Sa'y, the pilgrims move to Mina, a plain located about four miles east of Mecca, and spend the night there.

6. Next morning, after sunrise, the pilgrims leave for the Plain of Arafat located nine miles southeast of Mecca. They arrive there in the early afternoon, say the combined Zuhr and Asr Prayers and listen to a sermon given by the Imam. The pilgrims stay in the Plain of Arafat only till sunset. This is the same plain where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his farewell sermon.

7. After sunset the pilgrims leave Arafat and come to a place called Muzdalifah. In the Holy Quran, this place is referred to as al Mash'ar-ul-Harām, the Sacred Monument. On reaching Muzdalifah, the pilgrims combine Maghrib and Isha Prayers and spend the night there and collect small stones (pebbles) for throwing at three pillars as prescribed next. In the morning, after saying the Fajr Prayer, the pilgrims return to Mina once again.

8. The pilgrims reach Mina on the tenth day of Dhul-Ḥijjah. This is the busiest day of the pilgrimage. The first ceremony that is performed at Mina is the throwing of small stones or Ramy-ul-Jimār. In this ceremony the pilgrims throw stones at three pillars in a symbolic act of striking the devil.

9. The tenth day of Dhul-Ḥijjah is also the day when pilgrims sacrifice their animals. This day is also celebrated all over the Muslim world as the festive day of Eid al Adha.

10. After performing the sacrifice the pilgrims have their heads shaved or their hair clipped. After this they emerge from the state of ihram by wearing their everyday clothes.

11. Clad in their everyday clothes the pilgrims perform another tawaf of the Ka'ba. This tawaf is called tawaf e ziarat.

12. Before the tenth day of Dhul-Ḥijjah ends, the pilgrims perform another sa'yy between the hills of Safa and Marwa.

13. After this the pilgrims return once again to Mina where they stay until the twelfth or thirteenth day of Dhul-Ḥijjah. During these two or three days the pilgrims continue to perform the ceremony of Ramy-ul-Jimār or throwing of stones.

14. On the afternoon of the twelfth Dhul-Ḥijjah (or of the thirteenth) the pilgrims return to Mecca for the last ceremony of the pilgrimage. This ceremony consists of the farewell tawaf of the Ka'ba after which the entire pilgrimage is completed and the pilgrims are free to go wherever they wish.

Although not part of the prescribed pilgrimage, many pilgrims carry on to Madīnah and visit Masjid al-Nabawi or the Prophet's Mosque. It was in the compound of this Mosque that Prophet Muhammad was buried.

While the Ḥajj may only be performed during the prescribed dates of the month of Dhul-Ḥijjah, a Lesser Pilgrimage called Umrah may be made individually at any time during the year.

As Written or as Spoken?

Arabic words can be transliterated into English two ways, as written in Arabic and as spoken or pronounced. Here are two examples:

خدام الاحمدیه would be Khuddam al-Ahmadiyya as written in Arabic but Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya as spoken.

بیت الرحمٰن would be Bait al-Rahman as written in Arabic but Bait-ur-Rahman as spoken.

Khilāfat News & Announcements

Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ V attends 10th Masroor Cricket Tournament

From 2 to 6 May 2018, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK hosted the 10th International Masroor Cricket Tournament in London.

The final match and the concluding session were graced by the presence of the World Head and Fifth Khalifa (Caliph) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.

The final match between Canada and England ended in a nail biting finish with the Canadian team making the required 2 runs off the last ball to win the match. Canada won the trophy for the 7th time running.

Twenty-two teams from around the world, including Canada, USA, Australia, Trinidad, UAE and a number of European countries played 64 matches during the T-20 tournament.

His Holiness Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad distributed the prizes to the winners and led a silent prayer to conclude the event.

New Ahmadiyya Mosque Opened in Nottingham, UK

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is pleased to announce that on 13 May 2018, the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad inaugurated the Baitul-Hafeez Mosque (House of the Protector) in Nottingham in the East Midlands region of England.

During his address, His Holiness advised those Ahmadi Muslims who had recently immigrated to the UK to learn the English language. He said learning English was an essential element of integration and would enable newly immigrated Ahmadi Muslims to better guide and morally train their children.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Alhamdulillah, Allah the Almighty has blessed you with this new Mosque in which you can join together to worship Him and also hold various activities and functions, which will Insha'Allah be a means of Tarbiyat for you and your children. Upon attaining this huge blessing, you should all be extremely grateful to Allah the Almighty."

"True gratitude requires you to constantly strive to fulfill the conditions of Bai'at as prescribed by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and to act upon all that he taught and desired from his Jamā'at. Above all, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) wanted for us to seek the nearness of Allah the Almighty and to fulfill the rights of mankind."

His Holiness quoted the writings of the Promised Messiah, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be upon him), who said: "Inappropriate excuses for forsaking Ṣalāt are nothing except a result of the weakness of one's own

conscience. Do not be guilty of negligence and injustice in the fulfillment of the rights of Allah and the rights of mankind. Be honest and manifest integrity in the fulfillment of your religious obligations."

The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) further said: "Adopt brotherhood and love amongst yourselves. Leave entirely all forms of hatefulness and conflict. Forsake all forms of mockery and taunting because they take a person's heart away from truthfulness and far beyond. Treat one another with respect and every person should prioritize the comfort of his brother above his own comfort. Sincerely devote yourselves to Allah the Almighty and return to His obedience."

Concluding his address, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Today the situation of the world is extremely grave and is becoming increasingly dangerous by the day and so to be saved from the devastating consequences of the wars and injustices prevalent in the world we must follow the guidance of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) at all times."

Bait-ul-Muqeet Mosque (House of the All Powerful God) in Walsall in the West Midlands region of England inaugurated

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is pleased to announce that on 12 May 2018, the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad inaugurated the Baitul-Muqeet Mosque (House of the All Powerful God) in Walsall in the West Midlands region of England.

The highlight of the event was the keynote address delivered by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, during which he categorically stated that Islam rejected all forms of terrorism and extremism.

He also praised the "*open hearts and open minds*" of the local people for permitting the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to build a Mosque and contrasted such religious freedom with the situation of Ahmadi Muslims in certain other countries, where they are persecuted and unable to practice their faith openly and freely.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Some of you, whether amongst our neighbors or other guests, may feel a degree of trepidation and harbor reservations about this Mosque. You may fear that it will be used to sow seeds of division in society or to inflame tensions between different communities."

"Certainly, I very much appreciate and understand such concerns because we are all tragically witness to the fact that some so-called Muslims have conducted heinous terrorist acts, both here in the UK and abroad in recent times. Such vile acts have created a climate of fear amongst non-Muslims and, at the same time, have served to defame the religion of Islam."

Referring to the Muslims who had travelled abroad to join extremist groups, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Perhaps, they believed they were going to fight in defense of Islam, but the truth is that whatever cruelties and evil acts they perpetrated were in complete defiance of Islam's true teachings and proved only their total ignorance of the religion they claimed to represent."

His Holiness explained that wars fought by Muslims in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) "were not aggressive or fought to conquer lands" rather were defensive wars that were fought as a last resort to defend the universal principle of "freedom of belief".

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "The Holy Quran has made it crystal clear that it is the duty of Muslims to protect all religions and the people of all beliefs and to

preserve the sanctity of all places of worship. It has enshrined freedom of belief as an indispensable and paramount tenet of Islam."

"If any of you fear that this Mosque will prove to be a center of extremism filled with cruel and heartless people, let me reassure you at the outset. Our religion seeks to bring people together through love and dialogue and never through force or fear. Islam completely rejects all forms of extremism and terrorism. There is no ambiguity or doubt in this matter."

His Holiness explained the Holy Quran's description of Allah as the 'Lord of all the worlds', who provides for all Creation. Thus, true Muslims could never inflict any cruelty or injustice towards non-Muslims.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "It is a fundamental Islamic principle that Mosques are open to mankind and Allah the Almighty has decreed that to prevent people from entering a Mosque is a great cruelty and injustice."

"I reiterate that true Mosques are open to all people for the worship of the One God and so the doors to every Mosque built by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, no matter where in the world, are open to the people of all faiths and beliefs."

"Throughout his life, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him) sought to unite mankind and to build bridges with the people of different communities and beliefs. He sought inter-faith dialogue and was ever mindful of the sentiments of other people."

His Holiness said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had set "an everlasting example of religious tolerance for all Muslims to follow" when he permitted a Christian delegation from the city of Najran to worship in his own Mosque according to their own customs and beliefs.

Later, His Holiness spoke about how Ahmadi Muslims sought to integrate and positively contribute to the societies in which they lived.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "The history of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community testifies to the fact that wherever we build a Mosque, the local people soon see for themselves that where Ahmadi Muslims join together to worship, they also gather together to spread peace and to serve their neighboring communities and the wider society."

"We consider it a great favor of this town and its people that they have enabled us to build this Mosque… We will never forget this favor and consider it our religious duty to care for the people in this community, to be loyal to this nation and to be ever ready for your service and to offer our help and assistance wherever and whenever it is needed."

Thereafter, His Holiness said that due to their Islamic faith, Ahmadi Muslims are engaged in humanitarian projects across the world. He mentioned how the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community had established schools and hospitals in Africa and were providing electricity and water in remote and extremely deprived villages. He said that Ahmadi Muslims seek no reward or praise for their efforts.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Bringing relief to others and alleviating the physical and mental suffering of mankind is our mission and an integral part of our faith… We do not consider that we are doing them a favor, rather by enabling us to fulfill our duties to serve others, they are helping us."

"This is true Islam. It is a religion of compassion and benevolence and a religion that seeks to knock down the walls of injustice that divide us through the power of love and humanity."

Concluding his address, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad prayed: "With all my heart, I pray that this Mosque proves to be a beacon of light for the entire community and serves as a symbol of unity, togetherness and peace."

Earlier, various guest speakers took to the stage to congratulate the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community on the opening of the Mosque.

The Vice Lord-Lieutenant for the West Midlands, Dr Beverly Lindsay, OBE OD said: "Today demonstrates our continued inclusivity as a nation. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's motto of 'Love for All, Hatred for None' is evident in your every act."

Steve McCabe MP for Birmingham Selly Oak said: "I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge your work in promoting peace and exemplary work in helping those less fortunate… You suffer from persecution and intimidation in Pakistan and, in such circumstances, it is tempting to retreat, but the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to practice what it preaches – Love for All, Hatred for None."

Eleanor Smith, MP for Wolver Hampton South West said: "Ahmadi Muslims speak of kindness and charity and I am very happy you have been able to open this wonderful new Mosque in Walsall. My own view is that belief in God is good for both the individual and for society."

Bill Etheridge MEP for West Midlands said: "The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a credit to the people of the West Midlands. I can think of no better people than the local Ahmadi Muslims… I will remember this day for a long time and will forever respect Ahmadi Muslims."

The formal proceedings concluded with a silent prayer led by His Holiness.

"The 2018 meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government comes at a time of great anxiety in the world. We are witnessing a deeply disturbing increase in conflicts and tensions between nations that is leaving a trail of death and heart wrenching suffering for tens of millions of innocent men, women and children.

The rise in nationalism and the growing entrenchment of ideologies of opposing blocs is feeding a climate of mistrust, suspicion and hate. Economic and political superiority is becoming the driving force that is resulting in the usurping of human rights in favor of national interest.

This year marks one hundred years since the end of the First World War and soon after the world was again thrown into the darkness and horror of war that resulted in the terrible destruction caused by the Second World War. Yet it seems that man has not learned any lessons from history. For the same factors prevailing then are prevailing now and if the world continues along its current path then a further catastrophic conflict is, sadly, fast becoming a plausible reality.

As you gather in London for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, it is imperative that you use your goodwill, friendships and your mutual bond as human beings to renew and reinvigorate all measures that can generate peace. It is your moral duty to act with a greater sense of urgency to end the suffering of people across the world, to focus minds on education that leads to progress rather than turn a blind eye to the hopelessness and poverty that feeds resentment and revenge.

We are all God's creatures and this implores us to act with greater love, compassion and absolute justice with each other to build bridges, to forge partnerships and to strive for the good of all – especially the weak and the vulnerable in society.

I pray that as you convene in peace you are able to rekindle a hope for peace, not just for the Commonwealth nations but for the whole of mankind. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a peace-loving community that spans 210 countries and we stand ready to serve with all who seek to establish peace. May God bless your noble efforts with success. Ameen."

43 graduates receive Shahid degrees from Head of the Worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is pleased to announce that on 25 March 2018, the 6th Convocation Ceremony for Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya UK, the 7th Convocation Ceremony for Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya Canada and the 3rd Convocation Ceremony for Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya Germany took place in a combined event at the UK college premises in Haslemere, Surrey.

The World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad presided over the ceremony and delivered the keynote address.

During the ceremony, 18

graduates from Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya UK, 14 graduates from Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya Canada and 11 graduates from Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya Germany were presented with their 'Shahid Degree' certificates by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad and were thus enrolled as official Missionaries and Imams of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Following the presentation, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad delivered a faith-inspiring address, in which he reminded the young Imams that they should fulfill, their pledge of devoting their lives for the sake of Islam.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "What is the objective of dedicating your life for the sake of your faith? It is to make every possible effort towards fulfilling the mission of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) and so at every moment of your lives you must strive towards achieving this. Remember, the Promised Messiah's mission was to revive the true teachings of Islam and to establish the Oneness of God Almighty and to spread the true message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa] throughout the world."

His Holiness said that society was becoming increasingly materialistic and drawn towards atheism. He said reversing this trend was the great challenge of the time for the young Imams.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "It is your duty to safeguard humanity by bringing it back towards God Almighty. This is the real purpose of devoting your lives and to achieve this supreme goal, you must seek to fulfill your potential and to utilize all your faculties and capabilities. Remember, this is no easy task and so you will have to be fully determined and never waver in your efforts."

His Holiness said that first and foremost the Imams must continually develop their personal relationship with Allah the Almighty.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) stated very clearly that our ambitions can only be realized through prayers and a person can only sincerely pray if there exists a relationship with God Almighty. Hence, you must wage a personal Jihad of self-reformation and improvement."

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "You must show a high moral example of dealing with your family members. If you deliver a speech on how to resolve family matters and how to create a good relationship between spouses and with children, whilst you yourself are not acting upon what you preach, your words will prove hollow, without value and fail to have an impact. Thus, becoming an Imam carries with it a great burden and a heavy personal responsibility."

Reiterating the importance of prayer, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Today, the world is in desperate need of people who have a living relationship with God and who feel compassion for His Creation. The world needs people who can save mankind from falling further into an abyss of materialism. For this to be achieved, we must rely upon the power of earnest prayer."

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "Much wrongdoing and conflicts arise from the fact that people think ill of others. Thus, even if others think ill of you or treat you unkindly, you must not react in a like fashion. Rather, you must wish such people well and guide them with wisdom so that they come to realize the error of their ways and comprehend that whatever was in their hearts was false. This will only happen if your hearts are filled with love for others."

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad relaunches Al-Hakam newspaper

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is pleased to announce that on 23 March 2018, the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad relaunched the 'Al Hakam' newspaper.

Henceforth, Al Hakam will serve as a weekly English newspaper for members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and will aim to provide Ahmadi Muslims with historical and contemporary content regarding the true teachings of Islam.

His Holiness officially relaunched the newspaper from the Baitul Futūh Mosque after earlier announcing its relaunch during his Friday Sermon.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said: "I would like to announce some good news regarding the relaunch of newspaper 'AL-Hakam', which was first published in Qādiān and was later restarted in 1934 but only for a limited time. The newspaper is now being relaunched from the UK in the English language. This newspaper was the first newspaper started during the time of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)."

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad further stated: "Now that is being relaunched again, I pray that may Allah enable Al Hakam to continue publication permanently. As it is being published in English, the English-speaking people should derive as much benefit as possible from this publication."

The newspaper will be in print and the weekly editions will also be available online every Friday at www.alhakam.org.

Al Hakam was first launched by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) in 1897 and after its relaunch in 1934; it remained in publication till 1952.

MTA Management Board Approved by Khalifat-ul-Masīḥ V[aba]

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Weekly Guidance from Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V

May Allāh be his Helper

Friday Sermon 16 February 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

The blessings of Āyat-ul-Kursi & last three chapters of Holy Qur'ān

Before going to sleep, the Holy Prophet[sa] would recite Āyāt-ul-Kursi and the last three chapters of the Holy Qur'ān, Sūrah Al-Ikhlas, Sūrah Al-Falaq and Sūrah An-Naas. Every Muslim should adopt the practice of the Holy Prophet's Sunnah.

We Ahmadīs should be particular doing this. Considering the circumstances, we are going through, prayers, Salāt and remembrance of Allah is necessary.

Ḥaḍrat A'isha[ra] relates: Each night when the Holy Prophet[sa] would lay down on his bed, he would bring together his two palms and blow his breath on them and recite قُلْ ہُوَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدٌ and قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ and قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاس rub his hands over his body. He would start from his face and going down as far as his hands could reach and repeated this three times. He did this with such regularity that during the Holy Prophet's last illness, Ḥaḍrat A'isha[ra] would recite these prayers and blow into the hands of the Holy Prophet[sa] and rub his hands over his body.

Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates: The Holy Prophet[sa] once said: Come together and I shall recite unto you one-third of the Holy Qur'ān. Everyone was called to the mosque and when they were assembled the Holy Prophet[sa] came out and recited قُلْ ہُوَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدٌ and went back inside. Listen carefully, that Sūrah Al-Ikhlas is equal to one-third of the Holy Qur'ān. This chapter establishes oneness of God, and Tauhid has been descried in comprehensively. And when one believes the Holy Qur'ān to be the word of the One God and tries to follow it, he truly understands Tauhid and becomes established upon it. One should not think that having recited Sūrah Al-Ikhlas one has in fact recited one-third of the Holy Qur'ān, rather what it means is that, after reciting it, you should become firmly established on Tauhid.

Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah[ra] relates: I was with the Holy Prophet[sa] when he heard someone reciting قُلْ ہُوَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدٌ hearing this, the Holy Prophet[sa] said: "It has become incumbent." I asked, "What has become incumbent?" He said, "Paradise has become incumbent upon him who recites Sūrah Al-Ikhlas."

Ḥaḍrat Suhail bin Sa'd[ra] relates: A person came to the Holy Prophet[sa] and complained about his destitution. The Holy Prophet[sa] said to him: When you enter your house and there is someone inside, say As-Salamu 'Alaikum, and if there is no one there, then say Salām to yourself, you will be rewarded for this. And then recite قُلْ ہُوَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدٌ one time. The man did as he was told, and consequently Allāh blessed him with great abundance.

The Promised Messiah[as] says that the word Samad means that everything other than Him is contingent and bound to perish. Some people think that the word Samad denotes independence. His independence lies in the fact that He neither dies nor perishes, nor is there anything like Him.

Ḥaḍrat Uqba bin Amir[ra] relates: Once I was walking ahead of the Holy Prophet[sa] holding the reigns of his ride, I heard the Holy Prophet[sa], "O Uqba, recite!" I turned my attention to him so that I could recite what the Holy Prophet[sa] was saying. Again he said the same. Upon this I asked, "What should I recite?" The Holy Prophet[sa] said: Recite surah قُلْ ہُوَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدٌ. He then recited this surah to the end; and then he recited surah قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ to the end, and I read along with him. He then recited قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاس to the end and I recited it with him. There is no better way to seek God's refuge.

The Promised Messiah[as] says: You, who shall be the target of the enemies, should pray in these words: I seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of the creation and from internal and external enemies; and with the Lord of dawn, who has the power to disseminate light. I also seek refuge with God from the evil of the night, which is the night of the rejection of the Promised Messiah[as]. May Allāh grant us the understanding.

Huzoor[aba] said: We should prove with our actions that He alone is the source of all power and light and the Bestower of all grace. May we forever remain attached to the gift of Khilāfat given to us. May Allāh save us from the mischief of everyone who wishes us harm, be it religious mischief or worldly mischief. May Allāh protect us against the evil of the jealous one. May we always take God Almighty to be our Lord and our Sustainer and remain under His protection. May we take God Almighty to be greater than all kings and have firm faith in His dominion. May we worship Him, as is His due. May we be saved from the mischief of those who create confusion and mistrust. May we protect our hearts from all misgivings and seek Allah's refuge against this. May Allāh enable us to recite these verses regularly before going to sleep and blowing them on ourselves. Amīn.

Friday Sermon 23 February 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

Why do we celebrate the day of 20th February?

20th February is the day when the Promised Messiah[as], having received the news from God, foretold the birth of a son and published an announcement to that effect on 20 February 1886. We celebrate Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd Day on this day and hold Jalsas in celebration of the fulfillment of a great prophecy. This day is not his birthday which is on 12 January 1989. I thought it necessary to explain this because some young people sometimes ask why, when we celebrate Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd Day, do we not celebrate the birthdays of other Khalīfas.

With regard to his status in the eyes of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra], I will cite an account related by Pir Manzoor Muhammad[ra] the author of Yassarnal-Qur'ān. About six months prior to the demise of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra], He said to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra] that, after having read the Announcement, he had come to know that Miāñ Sahib, i.e. Ḥaḍrat Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad was the Promised Son. Hearing this, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I[ra] said: I already know this. Do you not see that I meet Miāñ Sahib in a special way and hold him in high regard? Pir Sahib[ra] wrote down these words and presented them to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I[ra] to sign them. Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I[ra] wrote that he had said these words to Brother Pir Manzoor Muhammad[ra] and then signed it dated 10 September 1913. On the evening of 11 September 1913, a day after the above-mentioned episode, he was lying down and I was massaging his feet. Without any prior conversation, He said to me: Do not publish this yet until a time when there is opposition.

Ghulam Husain Sahib, an elder from Sialkot, wrote to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ II[ra] after he announced that he was Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd. He said: My dear leader and guide, Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ II[ra], Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd! Having read the Al-Fazl of 30 January, I am deeply grateful to Allāh for having made true a dream of mine. Huzoor might remember that during the lifetime of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ I[ra], in the office of Fadl and in the presence of the late Shadi Khan Sahib[ra] of Sialkot, I had congratulated you, for Allāh had shown me in a dream that you would be the Khalīfa after Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra]. I had also related this dream to Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra] and Hamid Shah Sahib[ra]. God be praised that Huzoor himself has now announced in 1944 that he is the Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd, for I had known with certainty even during the life of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ I[ra] that he was God's Khalīfa and Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd.

Ḥaḍrat Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd[ra] did not claim to be Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd until God told him. He said: Indeed, because so many of the signs foretold by the Promised Messiah[as] have been fulfilled, many in the Jamā'at said that the prophecy relates to me. But I had always held that until God clearly instructs me to make such a claim, I will not do so. Finally, the day came. In a Jalsa in Hoshiarpur he said: "In accordance with the commandment of God, I swear by His name and announce openly that, according to the prophecy of the Promised Messiah[as], God has declared me to be that Promised Son, who was going to spread the name of the Promised Messiah[as] to the corners of the world." Then, during the Jalsa in Lahore, he said: "I swear by the One and Supreme God — to swear falsely in Whose name is merely the work of the accursed ones, and whoever makes a false claim in His name cannot escape His punishment — that God informed me in Lahore, at the house of the advocate, Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Sahib, on 13 Temple Road, that I am indeed the fulfillment of the prophecy of Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd, and that I am that very Muṣliḥ Mau'ūd through whom Islām would reach the corners of the earth and the unity of God would be established in the world."

A non-Muslim Sikh journalist Arjang Singh, the Editor of *Rangeen Amritsar* writes: In 1901, while Mirzā Bashir-du-Din Mahmood Ahmad was only a child, Mirzā Sahib published a prophecy which said: "You will have a son that will one day become My beloved. Through him I will dispel darkness and draw the world towards him. This is not a prophecy but a succor for the heart. Praised be the one who disgraced my enemies." In 1901, Mirzā Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood was not a great scholar nor did he show any political prowess. Hence to have predicted at that time that he would have a son with such abilities is a sign of spiritual power. Hence his first successor was one who had no relation with his family at all. And it was quite possible that even after Maulawi Hakim Noor-ud-Din Sahib[ra], the first Khalīfa, some other person could have become Khalīfa, because Maulawi Muhammad Ali Sahib, Amīr Jamā'at Lahore, was also a candidate for that position, but the majority sided with Mirzā Bashir-ud-Din Sahib and he was elected Khalīfa.

Friday Sermon 23 March 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

Denial of the Promised Messiah[as] is the denial of the Holy Prophet[sa]

The Promised Messiah[as] says: "Judge this Jamā'at on the criterion of Prophets and then see whose side the truth is on. Hypothetical standards and suppositions do not mean anything, nor do I employ hypothetical standards in my support.

The Promised Messiah[as] says: I am sure that those who listen to my words with an open mind will benefit and accept them and those who have prejudice in their hearts will not benefit them. They are like the cross-eyed person who sees double of everything. It is said that a man had a cross- eyed servant. One day he asked him to bring him a mirror from the other room. He came back and said, "There are two mirrors there, which one should I bring?" The man said, "But there is only one mirror." The servant said, "Do you think I am lying?" The man said, break one and bring the other." When the servant broke the mirror he realized his mistake. The Promised Messiah[as] says: how can I convince the cross-eyed people? The fact is that they always bring conjectures. Little do they realize that people will ridicule them.

The Promised Messiah[as] says: Every seeker after truth has the right to demand proof of my claim. I present the same that was presented by the Prophets. The Promised Messiah[as] says: I have made a collection of proofs form the Holy Qur'ān and Hadīth, as well as rational arguments which prove the present age requires a reformer, and the signs that God has manifested through me, of which there are 150 signs that have been witnessed by millions. It is not the way of the righteous to make absurd objections.

This is why the Holy Prophet[sa] said that he (the Promised Messiah[as]) will come as the Hakam and his decisions must be accepted. But people who have mischief in their hearts do not wish to believe, and so they come up with frivolous excuses and objections. But remember that ultimately God will, in keeping with His promise, manifest my truthfulness with powerful signs. I am convinced that had I been a liar God would have destroyed me at once. The fact is that my mission is His mission, and I have come from Him. To reject me is to reject Him. Hence, He shall Himself establish my truthfulness.

Elaborating that his denial is the denial of Allāh and the Holy Prophet[sa]. This is because before one denies me he holds God to be false since he implies that despite all the internal and external challenges faced by Islām, God did not; in keeping with His promise. God has promised in Ayah Al-Istikhlāf to continue the succession of Khulafā in the Ummah, as He did in the Ummah of Moses. This is because in order to establish a likeness between the Ummah of Moses and this Ummah, it was necessary that a Messiah should be born in this Ummah at the head of the fourteenth century just as one was born in the fourteenth century after Moses. Also, he will have to deny the verse which promises the coming of a Burūz (reflection) of the Holy Prophet[sa]. And he will similarly have to reject many other verses of the Holy Qur'ān. Reflect, therefore, whether is it a small matter to reject me? I do not say this on my own, rather I swear in the name of God that anyone who rejects me will also reject – if not in words then in effect – the whole of the Holy Qur'ān will turn his back on God.

You ask how rejecting of the Promised Messiah[as] implies rejection of the Holy Prophet[sa]. This is because the prophecy of the Holy Prophet[sa] that a Mujaddid would appear in his Ummah at the head of every century would stand falsified and his statement would also be rejected. It would also negate the Holy Prophet's prophecy about the coming of the Messiah and Mahdī at the time of the onslaught of the religion of the cross; and so you would be implying that while the onslaught is going on, the Messiah has not come. Now, would not anyone who accepts such beliefs also reject the Holy Prophet[sa]? I reiterate that to reject me is not a small matter. Before you call me a kafir, be prepared to be a kafir yourself.

Jamā'at was established Benin in 2012. Before accepting Aḥmadiyyat, Brother Ibrahim was already a Muslim and man of knowledge. He spread the message Islam and Aḥmadiyyat and converted three neighboring villages to Aḥmadiyyat in spite of his brother's opposition who conspired to kill him. Brother Ibrahim dreamt that his brother and a friend were digging a hole in the ground. The friend suddenly got ill and died after 3 days. His brother claimed that Aḥmadīs had done some magic. He reported this to the chief who asked for some money to settle the matter. He gave him some money. The chief summoned Brother Ibrahim and ordered him to relinquish this faith or else he will not live to see tomorrow's sun." Brother Ibrahim remained firm on his faith. The chief said, "I am the God of this land and do what I want. You know the verdict I am going to give, and you know that when I say a person will not see tomorrow's sun, he will be dead by tomorrow." The chief then ordered his men to take Brother Ibrahim away. The next day the chief was struck with paralysis and died after two days. This sign had a deep impact on the people and served as proof of the truth of Aḥmadiyyat.

Friday Sermon 30 March 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

Kindness of the Holy Prophet's for his companions, and remembrance of two diehard Aḥmadīs.

The traditions tell us how the Holy Prophet[sa] helped Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin Abdullah[ra] for his loan payment. He prayed for him, and how Allāh blessed him. The harvest was very poor and loan payment to a Jew was difficult, and this came to the knowledge of the Holy Prophet[sa]. Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin Abdullah[ra] relates: One year it so happened that the orchard bore poor fruit. The Jew demanded for loan payment at the time of the harvest, as he always did, even though I had not reaped any harvest that year. I asked him to give me a year's respite, but he refused, because he thought in this way he could lay claim to the whole orchard. When the Holy Prophet[sa] heard of this, he approached the Jew and sought respite. He refused again and again. The companion presented some dates to the Holy Prophet[sa] which he ate. The Holy Prophet[sa] rested and went to sleep. When he woke up, I brought him a handful of dates. He ate some and then stood up and again talked to the Jew, but he still did not accept. The Holy Prophet[sa] then took round of the orchard and said to me, "Jabir, start collecting the dates and pay the Jew his debt." I started taking down the fruit, and all the while the Holy Prophet[sa] stood among the trees. I took down the dates until I had paid back all the Jew's debt and there were some left over. When I gave this good news to the Holy Prophet[sa] he said, "I swear that I am the Prophet of Allāh. This miracle happened because God listens to my prayers and blesses my actions."

Huzoor[aba] said: While we see this example of the Holy Prophet's compassion and the blessings that resulted from the acceptance of his prayer, we also see how concerned the companions were about the repayment of their debts. This should be the hallmark of every believer. Sometimes in our society people who call themselves Ahmadīs resort to delaying tactics when it comes to repaying their debts. Sometimes such disputes go on for years. Let us always remember the words of the Promised Messiah[as] that whoever embraces this Jamā'at should adopt the example of the companions of the Holy Prophet[sa].

Ḥaḍrat Jabir[ra] regarding the paying of debt relates another Hadīth. He relates that a companion owed someone two dinars when he died. Thereupon the Holy Prophet[sa] refused to lead his Janazah prayer. But when another companion accepted the responsibility for paying the debt, the Holy Prophet[sa] led the prayer. The next day he asked the companion who had taken the responsibility whether he had fulfilled it or not. Such is the importance of the paying back of one's debt and such is the concern one should have.

Yet in another Hadīth related by Ḥaḍrat Jabir[ra] the Holy Prophet[sa] said: if a believer leaves some wealth and property, his family and relatives receive it. Furthermore, if he leaves a debt and his property and the wealth he leaves behind are not sufficient in order to pay off the debt, or in the case that he leaves behind children without any means of support, his orphaned children and the payment of the debt should be taken care of. The upbringing of orphans and making arrangements for their expenditures has been greatly emphasized in Islām.

It is related by a Companion: Once I came to Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin Abdullah[ra] and said: Relate to me what you heard from the Holy Prophet[sa]. Ḥaḍrat Jabir[ra] said, "I was once returning from a journey with the Holy Prophet[sa]. When we were close to Medina, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that if someone wished to reach his home quickly he may hurry on. Hearing this, we picked up speed. I was traveling on a camel that was of earthen color and was spotless. People were following me and I was going fast when at once the camel stopped and refused to move on, even though I tried my best to make it move. When the Holy Prophet[sa] saw this, he told me to sit tight, and then he hit it with his whip, whereupon it at once plunged forward and started moving very fast. The Holy Prophet[sa] asked, "Will you sell this camel?" I said I would. When we reached Mecca, the Holy Prophet[sa] entered the mosque with several of his companions and I entered with them, and I gave the camel to the Holy Prophet[sa]. The Holy Prophet[sa] came out and circled around the camel and said, "This is my camel." Then the Holy Prophet[sa] sent me several gold coins and then asked me whether I had received full payment. I said I had. He then said this money and this camel both belong to you.

In the end, Huzoor[aba] mentioned demise of two staunch Ahmadīs. One Brother Bilal Adalbi of Syria and other Saleema Mir of Karachi, Pakistan. Huzoor[aba] highlighted their achievements and appreciated their work for the Jamā'at. He led their funeral prayer in absentia.

Friday Sermon 6 April 2018 from Spain

Every Aḥmadī should shun falsehood

There are fewer job opportunities in Spain as compared to other countries such as France, Germany, Holland and UK. However, the economic conditions are much better as compared to Pakistan. This is why many Pakistanis come here for business or employment purposes. Ahmadīs from Pakistan come here due to lack of religious freedom and improved economic situation. The majority of people seek asylum or visa here to fulfill their religious obligations. Some exaggerate their conditions. I have often said that if we just tell the truth and mention the injustices being perpetrated against us in Pakistan in the name of religion and say that this situation puts a great stress on us and we are in a state of constant mental torture, government officials and judges often understand this and become sympathetic. They should be consistent so that the authorities do not suspect falsehood. Aḥmadīs should in any case shun falsehood. Allāh has declared falsehood to be akin to idolatry, and an Ahmadī can never be expected to be idolatrous. Thus an Aḥmadī should scrutinize himself so he does not do anything for the sake of worldly gains that renders him a sinner in the eyes of God. As I said, when we leave our countries to safeguard our faith then we have to keep God's commandments foremost. If our priorities are not in keeping with Divine commandments, then we do not fulfill the purpose of migration. And if we are in conformity with God's will, then we will achieve the objectives of our migration. God's blessings will be with us. Those who have understood the purpose of their creation know that their prime objective is to gain God's pleasure. And indeed we will also derive the benefits of this world, for God never deprives those who seek His pleasure from attaining worldly blessings as well.

Allāh has taught us to seek the good of this world and the hereafter from Him in the prayer: Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire. (2[Al-Baqarah]: 202)

In this context, the Promised Messiah[as] says: Man is dependent on two things for his well-being. One, he seeks to be saved from the difficulties and trials and tribulations that he encounters in this short life; and, secondly, to be saved from sin and transgression and the spiritual maladies that drive him away from God. Thus man seeks to be saved from worldly difficulties as well as from spiritual maladies. The good of this world is that man is saved from both physical and spiritual tribulations and from a life of evil and ignominy.

The Promised Messiah[as] says that the word "Rabbana (My Lord)" point to repentance. When man says this, he turns completely towards God. *Rabbana* requires that man turns always from all the others 'gods' he had made for himself. One cannot utter *Rabbana* other than with true anguish. There are some who utter these words superficially and their heart is not in it, but when one is praying from the bottom of one's heart, he utters the words *Rabbana* in their true spirit. The Promised Messiah[as] says: The fact is that man has created many gods for himself. When he puts his trust in his own cleverness and machinations, then those are his gods. If he takes pride in his knowledge or power, then those are his gods. If he prides himself on his beauty or wealth, then those are his gods. In short, he has thousands of gods. But until one becomes weary of all these gods, and surrenders to the One and Peerless God, and calls him with deep anguish, he cannot understand his true God. When man addresses God with an anguished heart and professes his sins and is penitent, and says that You are our true God and we were wandering elsewhere due to our own ignorance, but now I disown all those false gods and idols and accept Your Divinity and have come to Your threshold, this is the state of pure submission to God and worshipping Him and understanding the purpose of our creation that the Promised Messiah[as] expects from us. When we thus beckon our God, we will receive the grace of this world as well as the hereafter.

The Promised Messiah[as] says: Allāh says that I created the Jinn and men so that they may recognize Me and worship Me. Thus, in the light of this verse, the purpose of man's creation is to worship God and know Him and to become completely His. It is obvious that man is in no position to set for himself the purpose of his own life, for man neither comes of his own will, nor departs of his own will. He is only a creation whom God has blessed with greater powers as compared to other creatures and has made him the best of creation, and thus he has set a purpose for him. Whether man understands it or not, the purpose of man's creation is undoubtedly the worship of God and to know Him and to become immersed in Him. When man puts this purpose before him, he becomes a true believer. And then he also uses the good of this world as a means to attaining the pleasure of Allāh.

Friday Sermon 13 April 2018 from Bashārat Mosque Pedro Abad Spain

If your Bai'at is true then you must become spiritually alive

Allāh had made arrangements for ending conflicts in the world and bringing people together in love and harmony to be able to recognize God, but the Muslims have refused to pay any attention to this. This is why the Muslim world is now prey to all kinds of tribulations. Their religious and worldly leaders are pushing them towards the abyss. People living in the same country are shedding each other's blood, and outside powers, particularly non-Muslims powers, are making use of this discord and are causing Muslims to fight Muslims. This is a very painful scenario and it should turn our attention towards prayers for ourselves, who have accepted the Promised Messiah[as], and for others who have not done so. If our practical condition is not as he wanted to see, then it might be that we become part of those who are engrossed in fighting and mischief. The Promised Messiah[as] again and again reminds us of how we should conduct ourselves after pledging the Bai'at. He says: In these tumultuous times, when the winds of darkness, apathy and misguidance are raging, it is essential for our Jamā'at to abide by *Taqwa* (righteousness). Thus, if an Aḥmadī has pledged the Bai'at sincerely, he will have to become spiritually alive, otherwise it is of no use.

A true Muslim loves Allāh while affirming that He is my Beloved, my Creator and my Benefactor, and lays himself at His threshold. If a true Muslim is told that there is no reward for his deeds, he would still never stop his deeds and leave his faith in God. This is the kind of selfless love for God that the Promised Messiah[as] wishes to produce in us. Thus, when he employs his God-given faculties for this purpose, he begins to behold the face of God.

Describing his love for Allah, the Promised Messiah[as] says: Even if it was made clear to me that as a result of loving Allāh and obeying Him I would be subjected to the most severe punishment, I swear that my nature is such that I would bear all the suffering and tribulation with pleasure and love and joy. In spite of all the promises of punishment and chastisement, I consider taking one step away from obedience of God to be worse than a thousand deaths and sorrows and sufferings. Thus, the Promised Messiah[as] makes it clear that to completely obey God's commandments and to solely seek His pleasure is not easy.

If our Jamā'at wishes to please God, then we have to give preference to our faith. The Promised Messiah[as] says that just as uttering the word sugar or sweet does not sweeten one's mouth until one actually eats something sweet, in the same way the verbal profession of one's love for God and His oneness is useless unless it is supported by example. And this will only come about when we cease to give preference to the world and prefer our faith. If our Jamā'at wishes to please God, then they should give preference to their faith, and faith should be their priority. Allāh says: "Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment?" The best bargain is faith which saves us from painful punishment. Therefore, I say to you in the words of God: Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from a painful punishment? (61[Aṣ-Ṣaff]: 11) I have greater confidence in those who do not lessen in their zeal for faith; and I am afraid for those who lessen this zeal lest Satan should ensnare them. Therefore, we should never become lax. With regard to growing in spirituality, establishing a relationship with God and increasing our knowledge, the Promised Messiah[as] says: The relationship between a spiritual guide and his disciple is like that of a teacher and a student. Now, if a student were to associate himself with the teacher but not increase his own knowledge, then the teaching cannot benefit him. The same is the case with the disciple. The Promised Messiah[as] says that the mere association of a disciple with his guide is of no use unless he acts upon his teachings. Therefore, having associated yourself with this Jamā'at, you should increase your knowledge and insight. The same way as stagnant water becomes stale after a time, if a believer does not strive to move further, he is likely to falter. Therefore, having changed your association, it is important to increase your knowledge and act upon all the teachings.

Establish a relationship with Khilāfat and remain linked with Khilāfat through the medium of MTA. There are many who watch MTA regularly and write me describing how it increases their faith and certainty. The Promised Messiah[as] urged to read his book Kashti-e-Nuh again and again. He says: I have told my Community again and again not to rely merely on their Bai'at, because until you reach the depth of its essence you cannot attain salvation. One who is content with the shell is deprived of the essence. It is not enough to look at the superficial aspect until you try to achieve what is within. If a disciple does not practice, the teaching of the guide will not benefit him. A person who receives a prescription from the doctor and puts it away in the cupboard and does not use it will not benefit from it, and he cannot complain if he is not cured. The same is true of those who suffer from spiritual maladies. "Surely, he prospers who augments it," (91[Ash-Shams]: 10)

Friday Sermon 20 April 2018 from Spain

Three Qualities of a True Muslim

Huzoor recited:

And who is better in speech than he who invites men to Allah and does good works and says, 'I am surely of those who submit?' (41[Ha Mim As-Sajdah]: 34)

The verse is a perfect description and it encompasses all the qualities that should be the hallmark of a true believer. Who but a true Muslim can act upon this. If anyone possesses these three qualities described by Allah, a real revolution can take place in his life. Such a person will not only bring about a change in himself but in his environment as well.

The three qualities are (1) to invite people towards Allah; (2) to do good deeds; and (3) to demonstrate obedience and loyalty and to pledge that one will to the best of his ability try to act upon the commandments of Allah and His Messenger.

Allah has decreed: "Most surely I will Prevail, I and My Messengers."

There is no doubt that God has sent the Promised Messiah[as] in keeping with His promise and in keeping with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet[sa]. Therefore, the mission that has been assigned to him will definitely be accomplished, In Sha' Allah. Some of these were accomplished during his lifetime while others were to be accomplished posthumously and continue to be accomplished today. His message is now reaching the whole world and pure-hearted people are entering the fold of Aḥmadiyyat and Islām.

Allah always fulfills the purpose of sending a Prophet. He says: Allah has decreed: 'Most surely I will Prevail, I and My Messengers.' (58[Al-Mujadalah]: 22)

This verse was also revealed to the Promised Messiah[as] several times. Explaining this verse, the Promised Messiah[as] says: This is a Divine practice that has been manifested ever since God created man and it is that He always helps His Prophets and Messengers and grants them victory.

God Almighty says: Victory here means that just as it is the desire of the Prophets and Messengers that God's decree is fulfilled in the world and no one can counter it, like wise God demonstrates his truth with mighty signs. The truthfulness that they want to spread in the world, He causes its seeds to be sown by their own hands.

The completion of propagation of Islām was destined to take place in the time of the Promised Messiah[as]. The Promised Messiah[as] says: God has written and decreed that He and His Messengers shall prevail. And since I am His Messenger and have been chosen by Him — even though I have not come with a new law or a new claim or a new name, rather I have come in the name of the Seal of the Prophets and have come as part of him and as his reflection — I say that just as this verse had proven true for every Prophet, from Adam to the Holy Prophet[sa], so will it be proven true in my case.

Thus, the tree that Allah wants to plant in every corner of the earth through the Promised Messiah[as] is the tree of the Sharī'ah that was revealed to the Holy Prophet[sa].

The completion of propagation of Islām was destined to take place at the time of the Promised Messiah[as].

As the Promised Messiah[as] says that God causes His Messengers to sow the seed for the truthfulness that He desires to be spread in the world. Likewise, He has caused the seed of the completion of the propagation of Islām to be sown by the Promised Messiah[as]. And God should the Promised Messiah[as] some of these seed's ripened fields in some areas. And now this seed's trees are spreading throughout the world through the institution of Khilāfat. In other words, the tree that God had caused to be sown at the hands of the Promised Messiah[as] is now spreading in other countries.

Just as farmers prepare plants in nurseries so that they can be taken anywhere and planted, in the same way, the nursery of the Promised Messiah's (may peace be upon him) knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān and its commentary and the message of Islām as he taught us is now being spread to the corners of the earth. And the world is falling in love with the beautiful teachings of Islām.

The advice that the Holy Prophet[sa] gave to Ḥaḍrat Ali[ra] with regard to Tablīgh is also a golden guidance for us.

The Holy Prophet[sa] once said to Ḥaḍrat Ali[ra]: "For a person to find guidance through you is far greater for you than to be given a fine red camel.

Red camels in those days were considered a very precious thing to own and the one who owned them was considered very rich and powerful. Thus, the Holy Prophet[sa] said that the worldly riches are nothing as compared to spreading the message and becoming the means for someone's guidance.

Friday Sermon 27 April 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

A scholar and servant of the Jamā'at, Brother Usman 'Chini Sahib'

A few days ago, a veteran scholar and servant of the Jamā'at Brother Usman Chini Sahib passed away. Allah, by His special decree, enabled him to travel from a far-flung area of China to Pakistan and to accept Aḥmadiyyat. There is so much material regarding his life and his services that a whole book can be written about it. I believe that Khuddam-ul-Ahmadiyya Pakistan can undertake this task adequately. His name was Muhammad Usman, but he was known as Usman Chini Sahib. He passed away on 13 April 2018.

He was born in a Muslim household on 13 December 1925. After completing high school in 1946 he completed an advanced course from the university. In 1949 he travelled to Pakistan. After researching on his own, he performed Bai'at and later joined Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya. On 16 August 1959 he devoted his life and had his first appointment in January 1960. He then re-joined Jāmi'a in April 1961 to complete the missionary course and received the Shāhid Degree in 1964. He served in Wakālat Tasnīf Rabwah and in Karachi as missionary. In 1966 he went to serve in Singapore and Malaysia. He spent about three and a half years in Singapore and about four months in Malaysia. In 1970 he returned to Pakistan and served as missionary in various places. He had the honor to perform Umrah and Ḥajj. He also had the honor to translate various books into Chinese, including the Holy Qur'ān.

He started translation of the Holy Qur'ān into Chinese in 1986 at the behest of Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ IV[rh]. The same year in June he was posted to London where he completed the translation after four years. Chini Sahib himself wrote that translating the Holy Qur'ān into Chinese was a time-consuming task, and Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ IV[rh] had instructed that it should be completed by the Centennial Jubilee celebrations in 1989. He says that he was worried whether or not he would be able to complete the task in time and it was difficult to find people who could improve the quality of the translation or proof read the manuscript. Therefore, when the translation was completed, he travelled to China and Singapore to meet with experts in order to improve the translation. Thus, by the grace of Allah, a standard translation of the Holy Qur'an was published. A Chinese professor has written a book under the title "The Chinese translations of the Holy Qur'ān of this century". He has mentioned our translation of the Holy Qur'an as well. He has devoted about fifteen pages to the translation done and published by Jama'at Ahmadiyya and gave a detailed description of the excellences of our translation. He said that while some scholars do not translate certain words and retain the original Arabic word or give their meaning in footnotes, Usman Sahib translates even those words and gives supporting references for his translation in the footnote. He said that although some of the translation and commentary does not match with the Chinese Sunni sect, it cannot be doubted that this person believes in the Oneness of God, loves the Holy Prophet[sa], and abides by Divine injunctions.

She writes: He was a good husband and my spiritual guide. When I came to Pakistan he taught me how to pray. He used to come home from the mosque and lead the prayer for me. He spent hours teaching me the meaning of the Arabic words of the prayer. He taught me word-by-word and line-by-line. He told me to keep practicing and to keep the prayer book with me in case I forgot something. He taught me Qa'ida in six months. When he taught me to recite the Holy Qur'an he also taught me the translation in order to keep me interested. He was very patient and would teach me at length and with examples. When he was in good health he would work late into the night, and sometimes work on till morning. His most important task was the proper upbringing of the children, and he did not take interest in other material things. He was very simple in his food and clothing.

His daughter writes: He was very kind, compassionate, hardworking, tireless, optimistic and humble person. In every matter he would invite all his children and even sons in law to participate in discussion. He would take interest in our academics and would inquire about the response of the teachers. He would tell us that the purpose of our lives was to do Tablīgh and particularly to Chinese people. He would advise us to grow in spirituality, sincerity and knowledge...

Huzoor[aba] said: This is all true, and he had many more great qualities. May Allah grant him a high spiritual station. May Allah grant solace to his wife and be her help and support. May Allah make his children heirs to his prayers and virtues and enable them to walk in their father's footsteps. Amīn.

Friday Sermon 4 May 2018 at Bait-ul-Futūh Mosque, London

The Chief of the Martyrs, the Lion of God, Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra]

The Promised Messiah[as] has stated: "What was the condition of the civility, morals and spirituality of the Arab nation at the time of the advent of Holy Prophet[sa]? War in every place, drinking, adultery and looting. In short, every vice was rife. ... However, upon the advent of the Holy Prophet[sa], once they entered Islam, they developed such divine love and a spirit of unity that every one of them became ready to die in the way of God, the Exalted... What beautiful words has God, the Exalted, uttered in praise of the companions: 'Among the believers are men who have been true to the covenant they made with God, the Exalted. There are some of them who have sacrificed their lives, and some who are still waiting, ever-ready to sacrifice their lives.' (33[Al-Ahzab]: 24)."

I have been narrating the incidents from the lives of the companions, which included the companions who participated in the battle of Badr and some others.

Today, I will speak about Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] bin Abdul Muttalib. He was known by the epithet of Sayyid-ush-Shuhada (The Leader of The Martyrs). Asadullah (The Lion of Allah) and Asad-ur-Rasool (The Lion of the Prophet) were accolades given to him. Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] was the son of Ḥaḍrat Abdul Muttalib, the leader of the Quraish and the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah·.

The historical accounts of how Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] accepted Islam is faith inspiring. This incident is narrated as follows. Once, the Holy Prophet[sa] was sitting on a rock between the hills of Safa and Marwa. He was most certainly pondering over how to establish the unity of God the Exalted. In the meanwhile, Abu Jahl approached. As soon as he arrived, he said, Muhammad, will you not refrain from what you say? Following this, he started to verbally abuse him in a most vile manner. The Holy Prophet[sa] quietly continued to listen to and tolerate his abuse. He did not utter a single word in reply. After Abu Jahl had finished uttering these words of abuse, this wretched person came forward and slapped the Holy Prophet[sa] on his face. However, even then, the Holy Prophet[sa] did not say a word to him. Ḥaḍrat Hamza's house was right in front of the place where the Holy Prophet[sa] was sitting and he was out at the time. However, it so happened that when Abu Jahl was acting in this manner, one of the female servants of Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] was standing in the door, observing this scene... When Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] returned from his hunt in the evening, the female servant said to Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] very passionately, Do you have no shame in walking around acting all brave? Hearing this, Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] became perplexed and asked her what the matter was. She explained, Abu Jahal has insulted and attacked your nephew, Muhammad, but, Muhammad did not respond to any of his actions. Are you not ashamed that your nephew has been treated in this manner in your presence? Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] had not yet accepted Islam. Nevertheless, when he heard this incident from his female slave, his eyes became bloodshot and the honor for his family was stimulated. Hence, without taking a moment of rest, he marched toward the Ka'ba in that very state of anger. First, he performed the Tawaf (circle) around the Ka'ba and following that he marched towards the gathering, where Abu Jahl was boasting and mocking and narrating this incident with great pleasure. When Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] reached that gathering, he forcefully struck his bow against the head of Abu Jahl and said, You claim to be brave and are telling people that you disgraced Muhammad. Now I will disgrace you. If you have the courage, speak before me. At that time, Abu Jahl was considered to be among the brave people of Makkah, as a king and a chief of (their) nation. Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] professed his belief in the very gathering in which he struck his bow against the head of Abu Jahl. He addressed Abu Jahl and said, You cursed at Muhammad merely because he says, I am the messenger of God and that angels descend upon me. Listen carefully that I also profess everything Muhammad professes. If you have the courage and dare, confront me. Having said this, Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] entered the fold of Islam. In the narrations we find that after Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] accepted Islam, the faith of the Muslims of Makkah grew stronger

Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] always followed the instruction of the Holy Prophet[sa] that one should preserve one's dignity and self-respect. The Holy Prophet[sa] had told him that he must recite the following prayer: "O Allah I beseech thee, with reference to your Great Name and the Great Gatekeeper of Paradise," which he always benefited from. These things tell us that Ḥaḍrat Hamza[ra] had a deep faith in prayer, and why wouldn't he? It was through these prayers that Allah the Exalted had given him all the household things and whatever else he needed.

Full original text of Friday Sermons by the Caliphs of Aḥmadiyya Islam is available in print in Al-Faḍl International, Al-Faḍl Rabwah and Badr. These publications are also available online at alislam.org under periodicals. Translations and summaries of Friday Sermons are also available in various languages on alislam.org under Friday Sermons. In the US, please contact Faiza Bajwa to subscribe to Al-Fazl International. E.-mail: fh0294@yahoo.com. Phone: (718) 813-0700. Mail: 188-15 McLaughlin Ave., Hollis NY 11423. Urdu texts have also been published in book format as Khutbāt-i-Nūr, Khutbāt-i-Maḥmūd, Khutbāt-i-Nāṣir, Khutbāt-i-Ṭāhir and Khutbāt-i-Masroor. They can be ordered from amibookstore.us or can also be found at alislam.org under Urdu Books.

Activities and News of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in USA

Centennial Celebrations 2020 Fundraising

Dear Presidents,

Assalamoalaikum wa Rahmatullahe wa Barakatohu

March 24, 2018

You probably already know that Jamā'at Ahmadiyya USA plan to celebrate 100 years of Ahmadiyyat in America in 2020. It was a Shūrā Proposal to celebrate the centennial and a committee was formed that has been working to plan and execute many projects and activities. The main project as part of the Centennial Celebration is building a Mosque and Memorial in Zion, Illinois, once headquarters of Dr. Dowie.

It is estimated that the total cost of all planned projects would come to 2.5 million Dollars. National Amila has assigned Respected Anwer Mahmood Khan Sahib to raise the needed funds. We should complete our collection by December 2019 (next 21 months).

I request all Presidents and local Amila members as well as Missionaries to cooperate with Respected Anwer Mahmood Khan Sahib and help him. May Allah enable all of us to contribute towards this project. Jazakumullah.

Wassalām

Khaksar, Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad, Ameer Jamā'at, USA

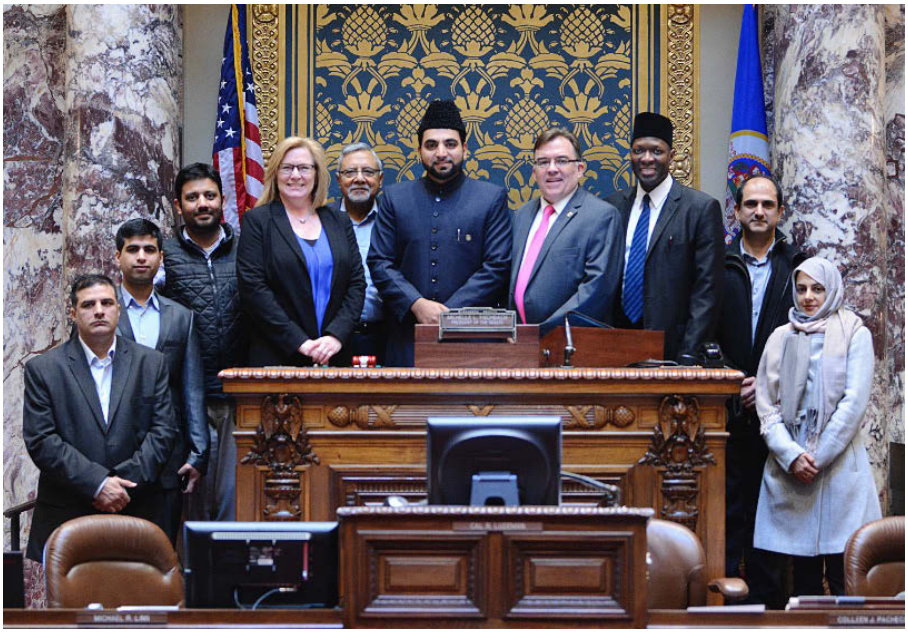
US missionaries with Additional Wakīl Tabshīr in Bait-ur-Rahman

Islam is a religion of Peace and Tolerance, said Imam Shamshad.

In Masjid Fazl-e-Umar Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, 637 Randolph St, Dayton Ohio, CCTI is going on very regularly each Wednesday, 7 to 8 pm. In which guests are invited to remove misunderstanding about Islam Aḥmadiyyat. Recently we were contacted by the students of local university of Ohio, to visit the Mosque and ask few questions, Imam Shamshad regional missionary of the area was present for this meeting to answer their questions. On, March 21st, meeting took place in the Masjid Fazl-i-Umar," The key to becoming good people is to follow the teachings of one's faith and Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance which gives total freedom to each and every person to adopt a faith of his/her choice," These remarks were made by Imam Shamshad Nasir while introducing Islam to said group of students from a local university that visited the Fazl-i-Umar mosque in Dayton Ohio during the weekly Coffee Cake & True Islam event. Student, asked many questions about Jihad, women duties and how one can say 5 times daily prayers? The local president of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Dayton Ohio chapter Dr. Shahid, and other members of the community, also discussed and answered their questions about various aspects in Islam. Imam Shamshad explained to them the

wisdom behind each teaching of Islam, the female students were invited to get in touch with Ahmadiyya Muslim Ladies, who were present in their own area. During this conversation, a regular non Ahmadi female guests who has attended many CCTI events and was present in the women's area, explained to the guest students how this arrangement is in fact better for both men and women and how she has learned this through her personal experience gained by attending various Jamā'at events. Dr. Shahid, explained the different auxiliaries in existence in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community which greatly impressed the guests. Imam Shamshad also further explained the role of these auxiliaries and their place in the bigger picture. The guest students were provided refreshment at the end of the meeting. (Report by Abdul Qudoos Ahmad Dayton)

Imam Luqman Gondal Leads the Opening Prayer for Minnesota State Senate Session



Senator John Hoffman of Minnesota State Senate invited Imam Luqman Gondal Sahib to lead the opening prayer at the Minnesota State Senate session held on Thursday March 22, 2018. After the prayers he sent the following press release.

"On behalf of the Minnesota Senate, I want to thank Imam Gondal and his family for being our guests this week," said Sen. Hoffman. "I agree with Imam Gondal's call for greater peace and understanding in our society, and thank him for his words of wisdom. We should celebrate our state's wonderful diversity and the contributions that all cultures make to our collective success." The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community mosque in Coon Rapids, which was opened in 2015, is the first of its kind in Minnesota.

Prayer Invocation by President Merced Chapter at Merced City Council meeting

The City of Merced routinely calls on Ahmadiyya Muslim Community - Merced Chapter to start their bi-weekly city council meetings with Islamic prayers. On Monday, April 2nd, 2018 we were scheduled to deliver the prayer invocation. This time respected President Sahib; Abdur Raqeeb Wali Sahib recited Chapter 2 - 256 (Surah Āyat-ul Kursi) and its English translation.

Alhamdulillah the message of God Almighty was delivered to at least 50 citizens of Merced City.

At this time we also took the opportunity to hand out 15 books of "WORLD CRISIS AND THE PATHWAY TO PEACE " by Ḥaḍrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifat-ul-Masīḥ Vaba to all the city council members, their staff and press covering at the Council meeting.

Mayor of Merced city thanked for delivering the invocation at the City Council Meeting. He said, we really appreciate Mr. Wali for taking time out of his day. I look forward to having him come to future Council Meetings. (Report by Shahid Sohail)

The Contribution of Ahmadiyya Islam to African Development Program at Bait-ul-Ahad Mosque in Cleveland

The Cleveland Chapter of Ahmad Muslim Community organized an event on the Contribution of Islam Ahmadiyyat to African Development at the Baitul Ahad Mosque on Saturday, March 24, 2018, to celebrate the 61st Independence Anniversary of Ghana. Imam Shamshad Nasir Sahib was the Key Note Speaker.

This idea to celebrate the Independence Anniversary of Ghana came from Imam Shamshad Nasir Missionary of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Midwest East region, who served in Ghana for four years as a Missionary (1978-1982) He also served in Sierra Leone in the same capacity. Imam Shamshad, has a special attachment to the people of West Africa.

Mr. Mohammed Zachariah, a native of Ghana residing in Cleveland, chaired the function. Mr. Mohammed Zachariah, in his capacity as the chairman of the program, gave the welcome address. He thanked all the participants for coming to the event. Mr. Zachariah gave a brief history of the Ahmadiyya Community in the City of Wa, his hometown in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

He recalled the major events that led to the arrival of Aḥmadiyyat in Wa and the initial opposition the Community faced before becoming established.

According to Mr. Mohammed Zachariah, some of his relatives were among the founders of the Ahmadiyya Community in the City of Wa. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's arrival in Wa, even though new and with only a few followers at the time, was able to overcome the fierce resistance of the other Muslims in the area by using peaceful approach to the resolution of conflict. The City of Wa has always been known as a City of Muslims throughout its history and even so today.

Mr. Zachariah noted the immense contribution the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community gave to his Hometown of Wa and to Ghana. Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, he said, built Schools and Hospitals in many parts of Ghana. And that Ahmadiyya is a household name in Ghana and commands extraordinary respect and attention everywhere The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is mentioned.

Ahmed Sita General Secretary of the local Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Cleveland introduced Imam Shamshad Nasir as the Key Note Speaker. Ahmed Sita traced the contribution of Imam Shamshad Nasir as a religious man, who has dedicated his life to religion since graduating from Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya in Rabwah Pakistan, in 1973, Imam Shamshad Nasir is currently based in Detroit as the Regional Missionary in charge of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana.

Imam Shamshad gave a detailed account of the Contribution of Islam Aḥmadiyyat and particularly the role The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the Development of African countries.

He used his familiarity of the West African Region advantageously at this event to keep the audience keenly engaged throughout his speech. Imam mentioned that once he was In Maryland the National Head Quarter, and went to buy some supplies for the office, he met an African person and approached him by asking if he was from Ghana, the man replied "yes" I'm from Ghana, the man said how he knew that he was from Ghana , Imam told him that he belongs to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and he was there to serve them, the man replied oh yes, Ahmadiyya is spreading in Ghana like fire in the forest" Imam Shamshad Nasir related the extent of the dedication of the people of West Africa to Islam Ahmadiyyat, He gave an excellent account of the involvement of The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to the improvement of Education, Healthcare and their spiritual uplift in Africa and especially so in Ghana.

Some members of the Cleveland Chapter have either visited Ghana or lived there for many years. Two Khuddam, Tahir Butt and Irbaz Hameed, gave brief but positive accounts of their extended stay in Ghana during the lively Question and Answer session that followed the event.

Dr N Rahmatullah, president of the local Chapter, in the end Thanked to the Cleveland Jamā'at Members, Mr. Mohammed Zachariah–chairman of the Evans and all those who participated in one way or another to the success of this event. We are already looking forward to the next such event at the Cleveland. The event concluded with a Silent Prayer led by Imam Shamshad Nasir. Refreshment was served at the end of celebration and a cake was cut by the chairman Mr. Muhammad for the celebration of Independence Day of Ghana. (Report By Ahmed Sita)

LA Inland Tablīgh Activities and Public Outreach

1) March 14th - 57 Guests mostly belongs to Jewish faith visited our Mosque (50 out of 57 visited a Mosque first time in their life), , this was as a result of contact made with them in the month of January through Rabbi in San Bernardino who attended West Coast Jalsa 2017. In our first meeting at someone's home back in January (I shared the post few months back) 15 out of 20 met first time a Muslim in their life. In our March 14th. Meeting they were introduced further about Islam and Aḥmadiyyat, received very positive feedback from them like to share their comment:

"*Once again, we were all overwhelmed at the gracious hospitality given to us today. The fellowship, the food and our beautiful surroundings were all magnificent. The message of peace should reverberate around our community and I hope at some point the members of your group can attend one of the meetings of our Yiddish Culture Club. Diane and I will confer and try to suggest an appropriate date. Please extend our fond regards and gratitude to Imam and your group."*

Report of the event printed in their local magazine.

2) March 22 - Our Jamā'at hosted Religious Founders Day interfaith event at the LDS Church in the City of San Bernardino, this is second year in a row we are holding this event in the month of March, last year Mayor of San Bernardino Carey Davis suggested to make it annual event in the City, he placed the date on the City official calendar and helped us in the planning. Total 200 guests attended, including city police Chief, Mayor and CA State assembly-member from 47th CA State district presented recognition to Jamā'at for holding this event. The topic of the event was "**Protecting the Dignity & Honor of Women Perspectives of the Major Religious Founders"** 8 different faith and denominations spoke on the subject. Meeting started with Recitation and closed with Silent prayer and key note speech given by Imam Irshad Malhi. In the end Jamā'at was introduced and highlighted significance of March 23rd, in the life of Ahmadi Muslim and establishment of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community by the Promised Messiah[as] under divine guidance from God and how Jamā'at progressing in over 200 countries around the world.

3) March 24th - Our Jamā'at was invited for prayer meeting in the city of San Bernardino, three group invited to speak, Jews, Christian and Muslim, over 500 people in the surrounding cities attended and organizer invited us to represent Islam, we displayed our Jamā'at Logo and banner "Love for All hatred for none" many people held our banner and took pictures and posted in the social media. Pete Aguilar, US Representative from CA 31st district and many local and State legislative members of California were present and they talked very highly about Jamā'at. One of attendee's sister was killed in San Bernardino terrorist attack on December, 2015 she was very happy that we Ahmadi Muslim representing true picture of Islam.

4) March 27th - In the city of Upland interfaith meeting; we invited National Tablīgh Secretary Dr. Waseem Sayed Sahib to present the teaching of Islam and Aḥmadiyyat, this is monthly lecture series called "Conversations about God" 22 people attended, in the end Huzoor[aba] book " World Crisis and The Pathway to Peace" given as gift to attendees. Received very positive feedback of the lecture Alhamdulillah.

5) March 30th - In the city of Pomona Jamā'at was invited for 14th. Annual Cesar Chavez breakfast, 8 members of LA Inland Jamā'at attended and represented the Jamā'at. Our Jamā'at was introduced by the organizer to over 500 people, many people afterward came to us and appreciated our Jamā'at work in Inland Empire area. Received many email afterwards one email was –"*I was impressed at your large table at the breakfast. You are really building a wonderful reputation for your mosque and for Muslims* in general."

In general, in the month of March message of Islam Ahmadiyya given to over 1200 people. Two cities of Inland Empire such as City of San Bernardino, located in the San Bernardino County and City of Pomona located in LA County our Jamā'at is well connected with US Congress Representative, CA State and local mayors and police chief and as well interfaith communities, this is all with the Grace and Mercy of Allah. We do city clean ups, feeding the homeless, food banks, donating books to children, peace walk to end violence in the cities. It's been recognized by both city mayors and other public officials and interfaith communities.

I like to share two Positive Event:

1) Pomona City Homeless Shelter: City and County due to lack of funding was planning to shut down from April 1st until July when new facility be ready and in operations, interfaith group approached us to contact county and public officials to have emergency funding to keep it open, we approached US Congresswoman Rep Norma Torres and other public officials and finally funding was extended by LA County board of supervisor by Hilda Solis , she was Secretary of Labor under President Obama first term and currently serving as LA County board of Supervisor from 1st district , city of Pomona comes under her , she is good friend of our community. There

is arrangement now in place that City and County provide funding for up keeping the building and food for certain days and rest local churches and Mosques will provide, Insha'Allah starting this month our Jamā'at Umar Amma Secretary Sahib will arrange twice a month, next month three times a month and from June every week arrange dinner for 150 people in the homeless shelter.

2) As soon we received threat "Punish a Muslim day" approached our Chino Police chief and as well San Bernardino County Sheriff department, they acknowledged and assured us to do extra police petrol on April 3rd, we asked them not only to Bait-ul-Hameed Mosque Chino but all other Mosques in the area and as well Islamic School in City of Pomona, when other Muslim communities heard about our gesture they were very pleased and thankful. Our local non-Muslim interfaith friends called April 3rd "Love a Muslim day" and sent us cards, flowers and cookies and provide us the good opportunity to introduced Islam and Ahmadiyyat. Also gave us opportunity to inform our non-Ahmadi friends that Ahmadi Muslim in the USA starting National Ṣalāt awareness 10 days from April 1st to 10th and the purpose is maximum members from our community come to Mosque's around the nations and offer their prayers.

May Allah fill the Mosque with worshiper in next eight days and we sustain this effort afterwards In Sha' Allah (Faheem Ahmed, President, LA Inland)

Birth of a baby girl

By grace of Allah and His blessings, I am pleased to share good news of the birth of a granddaughter, who is daughter of our son Muhammad Abdul Ali and daughter in law Sarah A. Ali. She was born on April 28, 2018 in Washington DC. May Allah grant her long, healthy life and she becomes Khadma Ahmadiyyat and delight of the eyes of parents. May Allah be with them and ever remain their protector. Amin.

She is great granddaughter of late Choudhary Muhammad Abdul Ghani of Jhang Sadar, Pakistan (Former Amir Jamā'at Jhang), and maternal granddaughter of Syed Mohammed Ahmad of Maryland. (Muhammad Abdul Khaliq, President Minnesota Jamā'at)

Rashied Ahmad Butt of Philadelphia Jamā'at passes away

Rashied Ahmad Butt was son of Khawaja Muhammad Deen Butt Sahibra, a companion of the Promised Messiahas. He had been a member of Philadelphia Jamā'at for over 44 years and had served Jamā'at in various capacities, especially as Secretary Talim-ul-Quran. He had deep love for the Holy Quran and was very punctual in conducting Quran Classes. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Shahnaz Butt, son Niaz Butt and daughter Dr. Noor Ashish. Mrs. Shahnaz Butt has served as Sadr Lajna Imā'illāh USA for many years. His son, Niaz Butt is serving in Philadelphia Mosque construction project. He is also serving as Nā'ib Afsar Jalsa Gah USA (Mukhtar Ahmad Malhi, General Secretary USA Jamā'at)

Advice for Missionaries and Preachers

Note by Compiler: A careful and complete reading of these prove that the one giving these advices was indeed worthy of occupying the office of Khilafat-e-Masīḥ-e-Mau'ūd. Huzooraba gave a most detailed exposition, the writer was a novice and it was not possible to have the material reviewed, yet I am satisfied that much of the meaning of the discourse of Huzooraba has been captured. The readers should read and act on the advices because every member of the Jamā'at is in reality a Muballigh—a missionary.

Ponder over Issues or Objections: When you confront some issue or objection, you should try to resolve it yourself. Do not immediately write a letter to Qādiān. You will discover the answer yourself and thus you will have a chance to ponder over scores of issues and objections and will develop the ability to give answers. If you will ask us, we will send you the answer, but then you will be deprived of these benefits. So when an issue or an objection is raised, resolve it yourself, and once you find the solution, then there should take place an exchange of thoughts and then you will develop another skill. The one who thinks over a matter himself and contents himself with just this, his mental abilities become dull. But when an exchange of ideas takes place, minds become sharper. One thing is thought through by one person and another by another person and when these are brought together a compilation begins to take shape. Two Muballighs, when they meet, instead of engaging in pointless chitchat should sit to ponder on these issues and objections. A connection with God Almighty must exist, and then there should be the habit of prayer and total reliance on God. (Waseem A. Sayed, PhD, National Tablīgh Secretary)

Great Lakes, Anṣārullāh Regional Ijtimā was held on April 28, 2018 at Bait-un-Nasir, Groveport, OH-43125.

Outreach Notes from Sarefin Zaman of Bronx NY

When I was being told (by Br. Ghulam Rabbi) to engage in outreach activities, first year I did not take his advice seriously, second year not again, third year I was thinking but was scared about it whether I have enough knowledge, or how people will think, etc. Then I wrote to Huzoor and started to go to Coffee, Cake and True Islam program at Queens. After attending two or three programs, I was thinking maybe I will be able to do some activities little by little: Then it started to have impact on me:

First, things changed, I was giving Salam to everybody!!! That works very nice.

One nice experience about Salam: One of my suited, excited, gentleman neighbor, we used to pass by everyday by just looking face to face. I had this situation very often because about the same time we go out for work. *After my transformation that I will give everybody Salam*, I gave him Salam then amazing things happened: He suddenly backed up and came close to me, took my hand, we shook hands and he said, "These days, there is nobody who gives such respect to other people," then he took out his business card and gave it to me and said, "If you need any help, let me know." I did not know who this guy was then I found out that he is a very established, renowned, Bengali lawyer in Park Chester area of Bronx. Now, when we meet, we give the gift of Salam to each other, sometimes he gives me first. Two days ago, he was on the other side of street going somewhere, I gave him Salam and he responded and also said, "Eid Mubarak."

Second things was, increased eagerness to gain knowledge about Jamaʿat. This Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh helped me to gain a lot of new knowledge. I regularly watched online stuff like Question Answer programs, various video clips of our Khalifa, etc. All this ultimately gave me confidence about outreach.

Third things that changed was my weakness to preach relatives: Now I don't feel shy or scared to preach to relatives.

During my Tablīgh activities for the last one year, I had different kind of experiences:

On day I was giving a leaflet to a young boy (age about 16-17) and asked, Do you have any idea about Imam Mahdi? He said, "Yes, we have to look for him and find him, he is not just going to a come in front of us and say that he is the Imam Mahdi." So, people's minds are changing from old idea that when Imam Mahdi will come, everyone would understand. Actually, we have to look for him.

One lady said, "Thank you so much, you are doing this Tablīgh activity." I don't think she was that much religious but she said so.

One day we were talking to a man about Dajjal. His response was, "There is no reason to disbelief you." He did not like interruption by his companion when we were talking.

One day were trying to give leaflet to a Catholic. He was so upset that he did not want to take it and was just avoiding us but at the end he gave us about 15 minutes and took two leaflets.

In the process, I have made 560 friends on Facebook and given out over 1300 flyers in a short time.

International News

Attack and gross desecration to Ahmadiyya mosque and a venerated site in Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

The dreadful outrage was undertaken in Sialkot on 23/24 May night by a mob with active assistance of state functionaries. As a result an Ahmadiyya mosque was badly damaged and a historic residence destroyed.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qādiāni, the founder of Ahmadiyya denomination had lived in that small house during his stay in Sialkot prior to his ministry. This residence is of great religious sentiment to Aḥmadīs, as a number of traditions and reports are associated with it.

Aḥmadīs had undertaken repairs and renovation of this house with permission from local authorities. Recently mullahs came to know of it, and found it useful to precipitate a riot and threaten law and order. Some sections of the civil society, a few bigots from the lawyers' community, and some 'pious' officials and politicians etc. supported the mullah and demanded immediate action against Aḥmadīs for 'outraging the religious feelings of Muslims.' A few days ago, the timid district administration proceeded to forbid Aḥmadīs further work, and sealed the residence.

This effort to soothe the miscreants did not succeed, so the municipal authorities decided to join them to do what they demanded.

Last night at about 22:45 some officials arrived at the site and told Aḥmadīs of their intention to demolish the 19th century house for being 'unlawful'. Aḥmadīs asked them to show 'authorization' papers; they had none. The police also arrived in the meantime and they took the line that though legal written orders are not available, the demolition will nevertheless be undertaken 'as law and order is threatened'. Soon a mob, 600-700, arrived and all these joined in to demolish the house. Thereafter the miscreants attacked the adjacent mosque and demolished its minarets, dome, doors etc.

These people were there till 03:00. Some of them came back at 04:30 and indulged in further damage. This time the officials did not join them, and acted as mere spectators.

This entire incident happened with the collusion and participation of the administration and the police.

The police earlier booked two Aḥmadīs, the local Emir and the president on fabricated charge of 'unlawful construction'.

Aḥmadīs are very grieved and feel greatly hurt.

ADHĀN—The Call to Prayers

Ataul Mujeeb Rashed, Imam of the London Mosque

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلاة- حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلاح

"O ye people, hurry up to join the congregational prayer. Hurry up because this is the real and complete success."

This is the theme of the message contained in the Adhān, the formal call to congregational prayers in Islam. No other announcement or pronouncement is called that often in the world. This Divine invitation is extended to the people of the world billions of times every day at various times. It is a practice that is going to continue to the end of days.

In Islam, there are five obligatory prayers to be offered each day by all Muslims, men and women. The congregational prayer is held in a Mosque, and, according to the teachings of Islam, Adhān should be called before each prayer. The purpose of the Adhān, literally meaning pronouncement and declaration, is quite obvious from its meaning. It is made to let the Muslims living in that vicinity know that the time for prayer has approached and that they should get ready for it.

The Adhān is to be called in a loud voice, sometimes through the public-address system, so that it is audible to all the people living far and near the neighborhood. The Holy Prophet[sa] of Islam is reported to have said that even a solitary person in the dessert is to make the call for prayer in the formal way. Who knows, somebody, upon hearing the Adhān, may join this person in prayer. Even if no one turns up, he would be benefitted on the day of Judgment when the stones, bushes and other things would bear witness in the presence of Allah that he did pronounce the oneness and the greatness of Almighty Allah at that time.

Different methods are adopted by other religions to invite the followers to their place of worship. Some beat drums, others blow trumpets and some toll bells. Unless someone understands the meaning of this clamor, it is impossible to understand its significance. How is the knell or toll of bells different from the ringing for mass? It is impossible to know the full message of the invitation; as such sounds are not self-explanatory. Without knowing the source of this invitation or the purpose for which one is being asked to attend, no one could be supposed to make the necessary preparations to rise up to the occasion. If such a person, who is not aware of the significance of the invitation, does step in to the place of worship, there can hardly be any real hope to presume that he would be able to offer the prayer with full concentration and solemnity that prayers deserve.

Islam does claim to be the most perfect religion for mankind. The institution of Adhān can be cited as another clear example to uphold this claim. The Adhān is a way to invite Muslims to their congregational prayers. The different phrases of the Adhān are not only meaningful, but add to the purposefulness of the whole practice. Any person, who hears a Muslim calling to prayers can easily understand the meaning of the words, provided he understands Arabic and no matter what religion he belongs to. The explicit meanings blend very well with the sweet call to prayers.

The very first words the *Mu'adhdhin* (one who makes the call to prayers) utters are: الله اكبر (Allah-o-Akbar) Allah is the greatest. The opening word is الله (God). It attracts the attention of the listeners. Allah is the creator, the maker and the giver of all that man can think of, nay, even much more than his imagination. The mention of the attribute of Greatness draws further attention and attaches greater importance to it. This phrase is repeated four times thereby asserting the opening pronouncement. The *Mu'adhdhin* then proceeds to say: أشهد أن لا اله إلا الله

I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah; أشهد أن محمد رسول اللهI bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.

This part of the Adhān deals with the cardinal principle and belief in Islam. Islam is a beautiful combination of belief and practice which leads a man to complete salvation through firm belief in realities followed by righteous deeds. As the biggest reality in the world is the existence of God, belief in one God with all His immense and charming qualities is the pivotal belief in Islam. The proper understanding of Allah can be made by having full perception of various attributes of Allah.

According to Islamic belief, the Holy Prophet[sa] of Islam, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, is the greatest manifestation of the attributes of Allah in this universe. Unlike the other prophets of Allah, who are His divine representatives, he has been given the unique status of being خاتم النبيين *Khatam-un-Nabiyyeen* (the best of all Prophets). In this sublime position as the chief and master of the prophets, he enjoys the privilege of having the lion's share of divine blessings. His example is the best one, for seekers after the nearness to God; he is the

spiritual guide like the well-known constellations are to navigators. The Holy Prophet[sa] received the final and complete revelation from Allah in the form of the Holy Qur'an. Through his divinely inspired wisdom and knowledge, he expounded the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and put it into practice during his sacred life. To know him is to know God and to follow in his footsteps is essential for progress in spiritual fields. The belief in the prophethood of Muhammad[sa], the holy founder of Islam, is therefore the second most important thing to believe. In a way, both the beliefs in Allah and the prophethood of the Holy Prophet[sa] cover the rest of the beliefs. This is why they have been incorporated in Adhān, giving in a nutshell, the primary introduction of Islam to non-Muslims.

Then comes the central theme of Adhān. The Muazzin says:

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاة

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاح

"O ye people, hurry up to join the prayers, hurry up because this is the complete prosperity."

It is required of the people that as soon as they hear this call, they should start getting ready leaving all the worldly businesses aside, no matter how important these may be. The separation from one's job sometimes involves a great sacrifice of time and money. While making this sacrifice, if one is mentally contented and satisfied, his devotion and steadfastness would greatly increase. This is why the call to prayer is immediately followed by a mighty assurance of prosperity to strengthen the hearts of the believers and to grant them the surety regarding the efficacy of prayers.

Prayer is the real soul if life. Through prayers, one establishes and develops communion with Allah, which causes His blessings to descend and illumine his darkness and failures. Prayer is the key to abundance and once in possession of this key, the doors of success in all fields are open to you. This last part of the call for prayer offers a possible answer to the question often asked as to why a Muslim should prefer to go to offer his prayers. The answer which comes in the form of an eternal truth leaves no shadow of doubt in the mind of a true believer and he decides to go ahead with his little sacrifice happily and without the slightest hesitation. Such is the logical way of invitation adopted in Islam. It is said that in Saudi Arabia, when Adhān is said, the shopkeepers immediately stop their bargaining's and hasten forth to the mosque leaving their shops completely unattended.

After the actual message has been given and its benefits explained, the greatness and oneness of Allah is repeated. Towards the end of the Adhān, the Muazzin says:

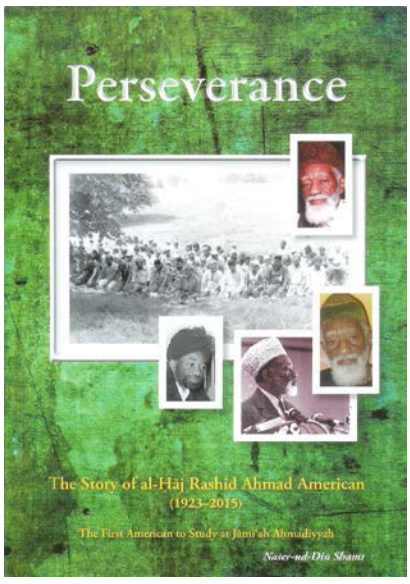
اللهأكبر اللهأكبر لا إله إلا الله

"Allah is the greatest and I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship save Allah."

This phrase which marks the end of the Adhān reminds both the *Mu'adhdhin* and the listeners that the most glorious reality on the surface of the earth is the existence of Allah. He is the Supreme One, Lord of the universe. He is the only one to be worshipped and blessed is he who knows this truth and spends his life in complete submission to His commandments.

Members can also pay for the new subscription, renewal or gifts to the local finance secretary and email the receipt number and mailing address to usa@reviewofreligions.org

Having no place to stay, I would routinely show up at the Mosque for the daily Fajr prayers at 4:30 am.



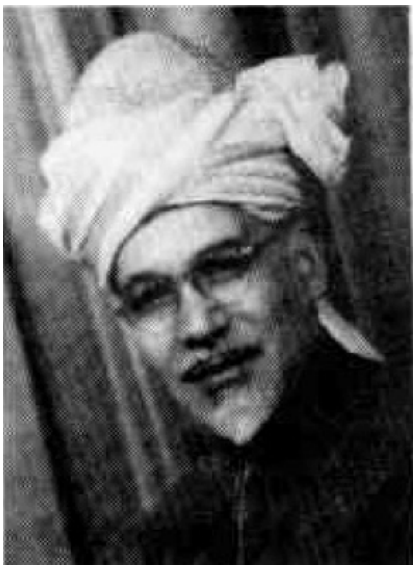
Quite frequently, my knocking on the door would earn me the blessings of waking up the others for prayers, and on the occasions that no one answered the door, I would offer my prayers on the Mosque porch alone.

The story of Br Rashid. Now available from amibookstore.us. US $ 4.

Dr. Mohammad Yousuf Khan

An honorary missionary of the earlier days

Ghulam Misbah Balooch, Jāmi'a Ahmadiyya, Toronto, Canada



Dr. Mohammad Yousuf Khan belonged to Jhelum, Pakistan. He was born in 1900; his father Ḥaḍrat Dr. Yaqoob Khan[ra] (died May 1931) was a veterinary physician, who accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1901. He was a companion of the Promised Messiah[as], and was very devoted and sincere Ahmadi. Dr. M. Yousuf Khan got his earlier education in Qādiān. After Ḥaḍrat Mufti Mohammad Sadiq's[ra] arrival in USA in 1920, Dr. Yousuf Khan also reached USA on his own as a student. Apart from his studies he gave ample time to missionary work. Ḥaḍrat Mufti Sahib in *The Moslem Sunrise*, along with his picture writes: "Our young friend in America, who works hard for his living and then evangelizes for Islam in his spare time." (The Moslim Sunrise April & July 1923 page 193, edited by Dr. Mufti Mohammad Sadiq, 4448 Wabash Ave. Chicago, Il.)

In the same issue on page 190 it states: "Brother M. Yusuf Khan delivered three lectures on Islam in Rockford, Michigan."

After Ḥaḍrat Mufti M. Sadiq Sahib[ra], he carried on his services for Ahmadiyya mission with Ḥaḍrat Maulvi Mohammad Din[ra] (died March 7, 1983, Behishtī Maqbarah Rabwah). While Ḥaḍrat Mohammad Din[ra] tenure was nearing to end, it was intended that Ḥaḍrat Malik Ghulam Farīd (died January 7, 1977) who was serving as a missionary in UK, will replace him in America, but somehow it did not take place and Ḥaḍrat Mohammad Din[ra] left for Qādiān and reached there on December 30, 1925. (Al-Fazl Qādiān, July 16, 1925 page 1 and Al-Fazl Qādiān January 1, 1926 page 1)

Narrating his earlier days in America, Dr. M. Y. Khan states: "I know these facts, since I came as a student in January, 1921 and spent most of my time with this Godly man…..

Ḥaḍrat Mufti Sahib[ra] was succeeded by Ḥaḍrat M. Muhammad Din in April 1923. These two holy men brought a great influence on my spiritual and moral life. I gained practical missionary experience from Dr. Sadiq and Maulvi M. Din. After the departure of Maulvi Sahib, I was made temporarily in charge of the missionary work and I began to travel to Indiana, St. Louis and Cincinnati. I established a mission in Cincinnati. I moved from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh in March 1930. Branches were also established in Bradock, Homestead, PA Youngstown, Akron, Columbus and Dayton, OH." (The Muslim Sunrise, Vol. XLII Number 4, December 1975 page 14, 15)

His detailed missionary reports are published in Al-Fazl, Qādiān, for example, 19 February, 1926, 23 April 1926, 17 August 1926, 19 October 1926, 3 December 1926, 29 April 1927, 20 May 1927

In the end of 1927 he went back to India, this was the time when Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ II[ra], appointed Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee (died October 30, 1955) as a missionary in charge of Ahmadiyya mission in USA, Dr. Yousuf Khan was also appointed as a missionary to assist him. On May 20, 1928 a farewell party was given to both these missionaries. (https://www.alislam.org/alfazl/rabwah/A19280529.pdf) At this time Dr. Yousuf Khan also brought his younger brother Ahmad Hayyat Khan to USA along with him. As a missionary in charge Sufi Bengalee took charge in Chicago, and Dr. Khan was stationed in Pittsburg, PA. his younger brother A. H. Khan also served as an honorary missionary in Cincinnati, OH. *The Moslem Sunrise* issues of 1930s give both mission addresses:

1. Dr. M. Y. Khan, 928 W. 7th St. Cincinnati, OH
2. Mr. A. H. Khan, 2040 Rose St, Pittsburgh, Pa

(The Moslem Sunrise, Dec. 1930)

In Pittsburg, PA his address on 2222 Webster Ave. is also mentioned. (*The Moslem Sunrise*, Vol. IV No. 1. April-July 1931)

In 1933 Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ II[ra] delegated Sufi Mutiur Rahman Bengalee and M. Yousuf Khan to attend World Fellowship of Faiths conference in Chicago (Al-Fazl Qādiān, August 27, 1933 page 1,2). Fortunately, Ḥaḍrat Chaudhry Mohammad Zafarulla Khan[ra] was also in USA for a short tour, all three addressed the conference. Dr. Khan's topic was "Islam Overcoming Racial and Religious Prejudice".

(World Fellowship Edited by Charles Frederick Weller, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York 1935)

Some of his reports of this period are also published in *Al-Fazl*, Qādiān newspaper, (Al-Fazl 9 April, 1933, page 2 and Al-Fazl 29 October, 1933, page 2)

On arrival of new missionaries from Qādiān, in late 1930s he discontinued as a missionary, however he was a very dedicated member of USA Jamā'at. After the demise of his father in 1931, his brother A. H. Khan returned back home, his reentry to USA is not known.

Dr. M. Yousuf Khan passed away on January 19, 1979 at the age of 79 years in Detroit, MI and being a Mūsī (Waṣiyyat No. 18845) was buried in Behishtī Maqbarah Rabwah, Pakistan.

Chaudary Muhammad Din Wainse, (1919 -2011)

Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Buffalo New York

In the spirit of the Qur'anic injunction, "Show kindness to parents." (2[Al-Baqarah]: 84) And Hadith of the Holy Prophet[sa], "Remember your deceased elders with kind words recollecting their positive attributes." I have written following lines in the memory of my dear Abba Jan (father). One wonders about the depth of wisdom of the above exhortation. By shedding light on positive attributes of one's elders not only one motivates the readers to inculcate those values in themselves and therefore helps promote a positive atmosphere in the society in general and also attains reward from Allah by acting upon above exhortations.

My father, Chaudary Muhammad Din Wainse, was born on November 14, 1919 to a respectable landlord family in the town of Ghazikot, District Gurdaspur India. Ghazikot is about 14 miles from Qādiān. He did his matriculation in 1937 from Government school Gurdaspur India. He rode bicycle to and from high school, about 6 miles round trip.

Abba Jan was married to my dear mother respected Razia Begum in February 1942. She is the daughter of Chaudary Dilawar Ali and granddaughter of Chaudary Sultan Ahmad[ra], the younger brother of Chaudary Sultan Ul Mulk[ra] Zaildar of Dehriwala Darooghian. Both Chaudhry Sultan Ahmad and Ch. Sultan Ul Mulk were companions of the Promised Messiah[as]. Dehriwala is three miles away from Qādiān.

Abba Jan accepted Ahmadiyyat at the age of 18 on April 25, 1937 and was the 2nd person in his family to do so. My paternal grandfather, though visited Qādiān along with my father, did not accept Ahmadiyyat. He did not oppose his children who, one by one entered into the fold of Ahmadiyyat.

Abba Jan had the honor of serving under Ḥaḍrat Chaudary Fateh Muhammad Sial, Nazir A'lā' Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and then Ḥaḍrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Nazir A'lā' Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya (later Khalifat-ul-Masīḥ III[rh]) in Qādiān from 1937 to 1942. He rode bicycle from Ghazikot to Qādiān and back, for several years. After marriage he rented a house on the outskirts of Qādiān.

Abba Jan used to mention his fond memories of visiting Ṣaḥāba during his service tenure in Qādiān, particularly Ḥaḍrat Maulvi Sher Ali[ra] who, out of sheer kindness, would take my father to his home and entertain him with appropriate meal including fresh milk of his buffalo.

After partition Abba Jan migrated to Pakistan and settled on allotted farmland in the village of Rampura close to the town of Sangla Hill, district Sheikhupura Punjab Pakistan.

Abba Jan started government service as a Revenue officer in 1943 serving Kasoor and Narowal areas. After few years he joined government department of cooperative bank as a sub-inspector and after partition he continued with cooperative bank department in provincial government of West Pakistan. After partition, his initial posting was in Jarranwala West Punjab that was 20 miles from our residence in Rampura village near Sangla Hill. Abba Jan rode bicycle to and from work. He served different areas including Shahkot, Hafizabad, Kambulpur. He retired as inspector Cooperative (Societies) Bank in 1976.

In 1961 Abba Jan moved to

Rabwah for the purpose of religious and secular education of us, the children. During our stay in Rabwah in 1960s he was mostly out of town for service and would visit home for a weekend or so every few weeks. He would bring with him seasonal fruit for us. We kids would wait patiently and count hours and minutes for the train he used to take generally known as "Dabba" because it had only two bogies. At bedtime we kids will sit on and around Abba Jan's bed for a family time.

Abba Jan believed that future of his children was in higher education. He had a high regard for educators. I did my 6th and 7th grades from a high school near our village. He invited the entire high school staff for a lunch at our home. When I passed my matriculation exam in 1964 and ranked among the top 4 students in the class, Abba Jan was very pleased. He took me to Faisalabad and bought me a new "Prince" bicycle.

At the time of admission to T I College Rabwah Abba Jan accompanied me. We met the Principal Ḥaḍrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib (later Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ IIIrh) who was pleased and based on merit waived my tuition fee and apprised me of his expectation that I should do even better in college. Then Ḥaḍrat Miāñ Sahib graced Abba Jan with a brief informal chat in Punjabi. It is worth mentioning here that when we moved to Rabwah. Abba Jan was a frequent visitor to then Ḥaḍrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad Sahib as I recall one such visit when Abba Jan took me with him.

My admission to medical school was delayed a little bit. Abba Jan saw a dream and mentioned to Maulana Abul Ata Sahib (the late father of Imam London mosque Maulana Ataul Mujeeb Rashid Sahib) who interpreted it as that blessed news is in the waiting. Few days later I received letter of my admission to a medical school.

In 1991 my parents moved to USA to stay with me. Initial few years they would visit back and forth their three children in Pakistan and two in USA. From 1997 onward, they were and now Ammi Jan is with me permanently. In 1990's I had the privilege and honor to arrange their visit to Qādiān. Their jubilation after visiting Qādiān was worth noting. They were also able to visit their pre-partition ancestral homes and Abba Jan was very emotional about it and kept recollecting the memories for long time after the visit.

In 1996 Abba Jan became US citizen but Ammi Jan could not pass the English test due to literacy issue. But she very much wished to be a US citizen so she could perform Umrah on US passport that did not require declaration of faith. Finally, I was able to get her US citizenship on medical ground.

In 2005 I, my parents, my wife and my three children, all 7 of us, were blessed with performing the Umrah and visit of holy sites in Makkah and Medina on a 10-day visit. During Umrah my three boys had the honor to assist and help my parents perform the rituals. We rented wheel chairs for both parents and boys had fun and blessing of wheeling the chairs. Our lodging was in the hotel next to Masjid Al Haram and rooms assigned were such that Ka'ba was visible through their windows. Both mother and father spent most of their stay in the Hotel awake, facing Ka'ba, visible through room windows busy in prayers. Every moment of that visit is a cherished memory for the entire family. It was month of May and Abba Jan got sunburn. He was visibly uncomfortable but carried on the visit in hot sunny days spiritually charged and overwhelmed by the occasion.

Abba Jan had many qualities. He was a man of principles, honest, truthful, straightforward and a caring family man.

His tremendous love and devotion for his family was remarkable. One of my earliest memories, when I was a child, too young to walk, and he would carry me on his shoulders for miles.

During his travels for work, he would frequently skip meals and dress modestly to save for comfort and education of his children. He did not care to impress others with worldly possessions all that he cared about was that his family was provided for. He also taught us the importance of honesty and integrity. Though it cost him many promotions, he never compromised his moral stature by accepting or giving a bribe despite the pervasive nature of this practice within Pakistani society in which he worked.

Abba Jan was a Mūsī. He and Ammi Jan did Waṣiyyat in 1978 and both paid their Hiṣṣa Ja'idad at that time. He was always regular in Chanda payments, Hiṣṣa Āmad and other Chandas, according to the prescribed rates despite financial hardships at times. He was regular in Tahajjud prayer and daily recitation of the Holy Quran. During his last days of illness in spite of physical disability and mental incoherence he would do ablution and pray to the best of his ability.

He had profound attachment to Khilāfat and Nizām Jamā'at. He was regular in listening to live Friday sermons. I had subscribed to Daily Alfazl (paper version) and Abba Jan was an avid reader. In 1995 or 1996 he decided to do a revision of the books of the Promised Messiahas and completed the revision in 3 months.

Abba Jan was a self-made man with high self-esteem. He had total trust in Allah. He would not ask any one for any personal favors.

He ingrained in us, his children, what it means to be devout. By the grace of Allah, Abba Jan was a recipient of many true dreams. He was a source of prayers for all who

knew him.

Abba Jan treated his children, sons and daughters fairly and equitably. He is survived by his wife and our mother Razia Begum Wainse, 5 children, 20 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. His children are as follows;

1: Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Radiation Oncologist, in practice, Buffalo NY.

2: Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Retired Superintending Engineer WAPDA Pakistan, now in Hamilton ON Canada.

3: Dr Muhammad Khalid Iqbal, in practice, Rabwah Pakistan.

4: Bushra Aslam Chaudary wife of Perwaiz Aslam Chaudary Silver Spring MD.

5: Shagufta Naseem Chaudary wife of Naseem Ahmad Chaudary of Calgary Alberta Canada.

He passed away at the age of 92 on June 30, 2011 in Syracuse NY. Next day on July 01, 2011, at Jalsa Salana USA, Janazah in-absentia was held by Naib Amīr and Missionary In charge Maulana Naseem Mahdi Sahib. On Monday July 4, Janazah prayer was led by Maulana Daud Hanif Sahib in Syracuse and burial took place on Tuesday July 5, 2011 in Qiṭ'a Musiyan of Ahmadiyya graveyard in Syracuse NY.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfat-ul-Masīḥ V[aba] very graciously led Janazah in absentia in Fazl Mosque on Saturday August 06, 2011 in London UK. Abba Jan's memories are our asset. May Allah Ta'ālā grant him high station in Jannat-ul-Firdaus. Ameen.

Health Corner

Health Benefits of Marriage

Dr. Lutf ur Rehman, Nashville, TN

Marriage is a social set up which allows a man and a woman to live together and raise a family. Marriage is part of every religion and every society. There is a difference between living together and marriage. According to the researchers, marriage carries more health benefits than living together.

Allah says in the Holy Quran, "And Marry widows among you, and your male slaves and female slaves who are fit for marriage. If they be poor, Allah will grant them means out of his bounty; and Allah is bountiful, All-Knowing. (24[An-Nur]: 33)

Widows and slaves are at most disadvantage when it comes to marriage. In this verse of the Holy Quran, Allah instructs the Muslims to make sure that even these disadvantaged groups should not be forgotten and attempt should be made to get them married. This highlights the importance of marriage in the eyes of Allah.

Once three companions were talking among themselves. They were trying to increase in spirituality. One of them said that I would read Namaz all night for the rest of my life and not sleep. The other said that I will fast every day from now on. The third said that I will remain away from women and never marry. The purpose of these claims was to have more time to devote to worshipping God and achieve salvation. Holy Prophet[sa] heard them. Why are you saying that? He asked. I fear God most among you. I am more righteous than you. I fast and open the fast, pray at night but sleep too, and marry women too. The one who does not follow me is not of me. (Bukhari – Kitāb al-Nikah, Muslim – Kitāb al-Nikah)

In another hadith, the Holy Prophet[sa] said, "Young men should marry as this lowers the gaze and saves from fornication." (Muslim – Kitāb al-Nikah)

The Promised Messiah[as] also wrote about the benefits of marriage at several places. I have taken this one quote. Talking in the context of Nikah verses, he said that it is obvious from these verses and many Aḥadīth that Nikah or marriage saves from bad thoughts and evil deeds. Then he added that health is also a consideration in marriage.

So the benefits of marriage could be moral, physical and psychological.

I will focus on the health benefits only. I have chosen 9 benefits for which there is most evidence. The studies I am presenting are mostly observational. The biochemical causes of these benefits are sometimes clear and at others still under discussion.

Heart disease is the commonest cause of death both among men and women.

Married women were found to be up to 65 per cent **less likely to have a heart attack**, while married men were 66 percent less likely, compared to singles. Dr Aino Lammintausta, the lead researcher at Finland's Turku University and author of the 2013 study, observed "marriage reduces the risk of acute coronary events and death in both men and women of all ages."

Lammintausta and her team concluded that married people might be better off financially, live healthier lives and have more friends

and therefore social support. The study was published in the "European Journal of Preventive Cardiology", in 2013.

Researchers analyzed data on more than 15,000 cardiac events among subjects aged 35 to 99 years old. Among these events, a little more than half resulted in death in the next 28 days.

The results: Depending on their age, unmarried men were 58 to 66 percent more likely to have a heart attack than those who were married, and single men were 60 to 168 percent more likely to die of a heart attack than married men.

Being single has been linked to a higher risk of depression, which appears to be connected to higher cardiovascular mortality rates, Lammintausta says. In fact, a study published in the journal *Heart* found that people who have both heart disease and clinical depression are four times as likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Feeling unhappy could cause inflammation and change how your body processes triglycerides.

Married couples are considerably **less likely to engage in risky behaviour**, such as substance abuse or dangerous driving, according to top psychologist and Ohio State University researcher Dr Christopher Fagundes.

He observed that people's propensity for indulging in dangerous pursuits drops significantly once they have moved in together – falling yet further after they tie the knot. One theory to explain the findings is that married people are more aware that they have somebody who depends on them, and therefore they make the conscious decision to put self-preservation above all else.

Currently, Dr. Fagundes is at the Rice University in Houston, TX and has an NIH-funded grant examining how relationship insecurity in the context of losing a spouse impacts inflammation, which is prognostic for cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, and Alzheimer's disease.

Married men were found to have a 64% **lower chance of fatal strokes** than single men, according to a report published by the American Stroke Association in 2009.

The study, conducted by Professor Uro Goldbourt of Tel Aviv University, Israel, also discovered that marriage satisfaction could affect your chances of avoiding strokes – as the 3.6 percent of men who reported unhappiness in their marriages experienced a less significant advantage to those who considered their marriages to be very successful.

The study, which tracked more than 10,000 civil servants and municipal workers from 1963 to 1997, found that 8.4 percent of the single men died of strokes, compared to 7.1 percent of the married men. When age and known stroke risk factors such as obesity, smoking and diabetes were included in the analysis, single men had a 64 percent higher risk of fatal stroke than married men.

Less Stress: In a report published by the University of Chicago, it was found that having a strong long-term bond can alter your hormones in a way which affects stress. Men's testosterone levels were found to drop, making them less headstrong, and cortisol levels fell in both sexes – a hormone that is required to regulate stress.

"Although marriage can be pretty stressful, it should make it easier for people to handle other stressors in their lives," Dario Maestripieri, Professor in Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago and lead author of the study said. "What we found is that marriage has a dampening effect on cortisol responses to psychological stress, and can therefore act as a buffer against stress."

A supportive spouse could be the key to **recovering from invasive medical procedures**, such as coronary bypass surgery, a 2011 study suggests.

Happily wedded patients who undergo major surgery are more than three times as likely to still be alive 15 years later when compared to their unmarried counterparts, says Kathleen King, a researcher from the University of Rochester.

"There is something in a good relationship that helps people stay on track," says King. "In fact, the effect of marital satisfaction is every bit as important to survival after bypass surgery as more traditional risk factors like tobacco use, obesity, and high blood pressure."

Married men and women are also considerably less likely to develop severe **mental illness**, according to a 1991 American study.

Social psychiatrists Lee Robins and Darrel Regier published a paper showing how "married people have significantly lower rates of severe depression and at least half the likelihood of developing any other major recognised psychiatric disorder than never-married, cohabiting or divorced people." This was the largest study published until that time.

If your marriage is a happy one, **you sleep better** than your dissatisfied or single counterparts.

Wendy Troxel, a psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh, found that women were particularly boosted by marriage. Wives were found to have a 10pc better chance of getting a good night's sleep than those who were unmarried.

"Marriage can be good for your sleep if it's a happy one," said Troxel. "But, being in an unhappy marriage can be a risk factor for sleep disturbance. If you're not sleeping, you're more irritable, have lower frustration and tolerance levels, so

it's possible that could affect the marriage."

There is little evidence that marriage reduces the overall risk of getting **cancer**. Still, marriage can influence the outcome. For example, a study of 27,779 cancer cases found that unmarried individuals were more likely to have advanced disease at the time of diagnosis than married persons. Unmarried patients were less likely to receive treatment than married patients — but even among people who received cancer therapy, marriage was linked to improved survival. Patients who have intact marriages when cancer is diagnosed have better survival than patients who are separated at the time of diagnosis.

Prostate cancer is a particular concern for men. To find out how marriage affects survival, scientists from the University of Miami investigated 143,063 men with the disease. Over a 17-year period, married men survived far longer (median 69 months) than separated and widowed patients. And researchers from Harvard and UCLA have identified similar survival benefits for married patients with bladder cancer, a predominantly male disease.

The big one – **longevity**! Research has continuously shown that by marrying you are effectively adding a couple of extra years to your life and, in some instances, up to ten.

Dr Ilene Siegler and her research team from the Duke University Medical Centre penned the most-cited study on this subject. After studying almost 5,000 individuals born in the 1940s, the authors observed how stability and change in the patterns of midlife marital status affected health risks.

They discovered that having a partner through middle and old age is protective against premature death: those who never married were more than twice as likely to die early than those who had experienced a long, stable marriage throughout the majority of their adult life.

Cohabiting which is common in the Western countries does not carry same benefits as marriage. Many of the above quoted studies suggest that.

Also to derive the most benefit the marriage should be a happy one as described by the partners and the longer the better. The benefits do not appear in one day.

The researchers also found that divorce was associated with negative consequences in health. Divorce and single status increased the risk of premature death especially in men. Both American and British studies found that stressful relationships and breakups caused a 34% increased risk of death. Women fared better after divorce or death of the husband compared to men.

Some researchers have suggested that one reason for better health outcomes in married couples was that they are likely to be better off financially and had better access to healthcare.

I have not talked about STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) here but common sense and religious teaching both tell us that the less risky behavior in this category will lead to less risk of STDs and hence better health for both partners in marriage.

Paul's "Vision": A Critical Analysis

Muhammad Ajmal Shahid (Ex. Amir and Missionary In-charge Nigeria)

All Christians believe that Paul was an apostle of God, and that all his writings are Divine revelations. Due to this reason, Paul's letters included in the New Testament have been given priority over the writings of Jesus's appointed successor, Peter, and his brother, James. It is an undeniable fact that Christians give more importance to Paul's commandments over Jesus's practices and directives. In fact, modern Christianity is based on Paul's directives given to Gentiles in his letters and not on the Jesus's commandments for the Children of Israel, to whom he was sent.

Why did the early Christians, who compiled the New Testament, gave preferential treatment to Paul's letters over the writings of the elders and the real successor of Jesus Christ? We have come to know that it was only due to his vision. This vision has been highlighted by Luke, in Acts, in three different places. Paul himself has mentioned it only once in one of his letters. When we study the details of this vision in these four places, we come to know some glaring contradictions. The comparison of the so-called vision of Paul is very important, as his "holy status" is based on this vision.

Why was Luke so interested in this matter? We will discuss that in the next relevant chapter. Let us first try to portray a critical analysis of this "vision," to know about its purity and authenticity.

Paul's Description of the Vision

As mentioned earlier, the vision of Paul has been mentioned three times by Luke and once by Paul

himself. Let us first try to judge what Paul has narrated. In his letter to Galatians, he writes:

"I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

"For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus." (Galatians 1:11-17, NIV)

In these verses, Paul has highlighted the following points:

1. He was an Orthodox Jew and archenemy of the Christians.
2. Jesus Christ appeared to him and assigned him the responsibility of preaching to the Gentiles.
3. He did not acquire the knowledge of Christianity from the apostles or early converts, nor did he go to Jerusalem for this purpose.
4. After the vision, he went to Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

After citing the statement of Paul, we now proceed to discuss the three statements of Luke, which he made at three different occasions, in the Book of Acts. Before relating the experience of his vision, he first discussed the general attitude of the Jews in regards to the persecution of the Christians. In this respect, he particularly mentioned an incident about an early Christian named Stephen, who was stoned to death. Paul witnessed this tragic incident himself and was very much moved by it.

Luke's First Description

Due to persecution by the Jews, the Christians fled from Palestine and took shelter in neighboring countries. Some of them had gone to Damascus, and Paul, with the permission of the high priest, travelled to Damascus to bring them back and slay them. On his way to Damascus, he experienced the so-called vision and thus became Christian. Luke has recounted the details of his conversion:

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. (Acts 9:1-9, NIV)

Some important features mentioned in this statement are:

1. Gamaliel, the Chief Priest, gave Paul a letter for leaders of the Jews living in Damascus to help him bring back those Christians who had fled there for safety.
2. A light from heaven enveloped him only.
3. Jesus appeared to him and commanded him to go to Damascus.
4. He became blind due to the dazzling light, while his companions remained safe.

Luke's Second Description

How did Paul accept Christianity? Luke has recorded this incident at another juncture in Acts. It happened when Paul was charged by the Jews for sacrilege, by bringing a gentile into the temple. This enraged the mob to the extent that they wanted to kill him. At that time, the commander reached the scene with his soldiers, and the mob desisted. At this occasion, with the commander's permission, Paul narrated the story of his conversion to Christianity in Hebrew. Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

"Who are you, Lord?" I asked.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting," he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

"What shall I do, Lord?" I asked.

"Get up," the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

"Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' he said. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.'

"Lord," I replied, 'these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

"Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:3-21)

In this statement, Paul has mentioned the following points:

1. Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel, a great leader of the Jews. He took a letter from him and intended to go to Damascus, to bring back those Christians who had taken refuge there. He wanted to penalize them.
2. This statement also confirms that "light" encircled only him.
3. Regarding that "light", it is said: "My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me." (Acts 22:9) This statement contradicts the previous statement, which said, "The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless, they heard the sound, but did not see anyone." (Acts 9:7)
4. The Lord commanded him to go to Damascus. Acts 22:10 states: "Get up, the Lord said, and go to Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do." But in his letter to Galatians, Paul himself has mentioned a different story. In Galatians 1:16-17, he says, "I did not consult any man, nor I did go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus."
5. In this statement, it is clearly mentioned that when he went to Jerusalem, the Lord commanded him to leave that place immediately because his life was in danger. The other statements do not support his going to Jerusalem after the event of the so-called vision.

Luke's Third Description

Luke has mentioned the vision of Paul a third time, in Acts 26. Here, with the permission of King Agrippa, Paul related his vision which is recorded by Luke as follows: About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' (Acts 26:13-18)

In this statement, Paul did not mention many important points, like of his becoming blind, which was previously mentioned by Luke in his statements. On the other hand, he added two more points which were not mentioned before:

1. Luke, in his statements, mentioned that light only encircled Paul. But here, he added that it also encircled his companions: "I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions." (Acts 26:13)
2. He also added that the Lord promised to save him from his enemies, both from Jews and the Gentiles. This was left out in the previous statements. He says, "I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles." (Acts 26:17)

We have briefly discussed the so-called vision of Paul, which is mentioned in four different places in the New Testament. Now, we move to analyze, in detail, some important points which clearly prove that it was nothing more than a fabrication, and not from God Almighty.

Letter from Gamaliel – the Chief Priest

The first and most important point that Paul has described is that he embarked on the journey to Damascus with the permission and authority of Gamaliel, the Chief

Priest, to bring back those Christians who fled from fear of persecution. Paul gives the impression that the Chief Priest not only verbally allowed him to perform this "holy job," but also gave him a written letter for this purpose. It is clear from his action that the Chief Priest himself wanted to persecute the converts to Christianity. But it is quite strange that a few chapters earlier, Luke has himself mentioned that the Chief Priest Gamaliel was against the killing or persecution of Christians. On one occasion, the Chief Priest gave council to the Jews who wanted to kill Christians and stone them to death in the words: "When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

"Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "...Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

"His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." (Acts 5:33-35, 38-40)

How can such a person who – according to Luke – was so against religious persecution, send Paul to Damascus to bring back Christians for persecution?

The lenient attitude of Gamaliel is endorsed by many historians

The author of *The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia* writes: "Gamaliel President of Sanhedrin at Jerusalem and teacher of Paul. Grandson of Hillel. Advocated leniency towards Christians..." (Acts 5:34, 22:3)

"Who is who in the Bible," published by Readers Digest, says that Gamaliel was "a man pronounced for his wisdom and tolerance." Then it notes that, "The only other mention of Gamaliel in the Bible is in Paul testimony that has been a student of his, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers (Acts 22:3) in contrast to his teacher, however, Paul did not at first grant tolerance to Christians."

It truly seems very strange that Luke himself writes about Gamaliel that he did not approve religious persecution of Christians, and in the same book, writes that he assigned Paul to bring Christians from Damascus and punish them. Keeping in mind the nature of Gamaliel, common sense cannot approve the statement of Paul, that he undertook his journey towards Damascus with the approval of Gamaliel.

Arabia or Damascus?

Another contradiction noted by the critics is found in the two opposing statements of Paul and Luke about the vision. Paul himself says that after this event, he went to Arabia. After a lengthy stay of three years, he subsequently went to Damascus. In Luke's three statements, he did not mention Paul's journey to Arabia, but did mention that due to the vision, he became blind and was unable to walk on his own. His companions helped take him to Damascus. In his speech before King Agrippa, Paul said that after the vision, "I did not consult any man, nor I did go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus." (Acts 1:17)

Luke did not make any mention of Paul going to Arabia. On the other hand, he mentioned that due to the dazzling light of the vision, Paul lost his sight and became blind. He was not able to walk on his own and his companions helped take him to Damascus. It says, "Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus." (Acts 9:8)

In another place, it is mentioned that Paul's going to Damascus was based on the commandment of his Lord. It clearly says, "What I shall do, Lord? I asked, 'get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'" (Acts 22:10)

If this statement of Luke was true, that the Lord commanded him to go to Damascus, why did he blatantly violate the command of Lord and travel to a far-off place in Arabia, and stay there for few years? Again, if it was true that he lost his sight, (although Paul did not mention this in his own statement,) how did he reach Arabia? A blind person cannot travel to such an unknown destination. No historian is able to trace out the exact location in Arabia he spent three years of his life. Keeping in view both contradictory statements, one is baffled at which statement should be considered true. The author of Encyclopedia Britannica tries to reconcile this under "Paul":

"Immediately after his conversion Paul spent a period of solitude in Arabia. He then took up his residence in Damascus. There presumably he established his contact with the Christians he originally planned to harm and received from the information about Jesus and his teaching as well as experience of Christian fellowship. Damascus was the base for his first missionary work, but nothing is known of the effects of his mission in the region."

Luke has recorded that Lord commanded Paul, "What I shall do, Lord? I asked.

"Get up," the Lord said, "and go into Damascus." (Acts 22:10)

But Paul himself mentioned before King Agrippa that after this incident, he went to Arabia. He did not mention of his going to Damascus. If the statement of Luke was true, why did Paul ignore the clear-cut instruction of the Lord, and decide to go to a different place? Paul also did not mention the losing of his sight. How would he have traveled when he had lost his vision?

Of these two statements, one must be wrong.

Sound from Light

Another contradiction in these statements is about sound coming out of the light. In one statement, Luke says: "The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone." (Acts 9:7)

Luke, in his other statement, says: "My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me." (Acts 22:9)

Note that in the New International Version of the Bible, the translation is slightly changed to "understand the voice," whereas the Revised Standard Version and other translations mention that he "did not hear the voice." This change appears to have been made to avoid the contradiction.

One can see the contradiction in both statements. This contradiction is noted by the commentators of Bible. Mr. Harrison, author of Wycliffe Bible Commentary, under the commentary of Acts 9:7 writes, "Saul was accompanied by a caravan. The statement in this verse that men heard the voice but saw no one appears to contradict 22:9 and 26 where is said that they did not hear the voice."

Similarly, Mr. Scoffield writes in the Oxford New International Version

"Compare 22:9; 26:14. A contradiction has been imagined." (Note under Acts 9:7)

Though commentators have attempted to explain this, the different statements glaringly contradict each other.

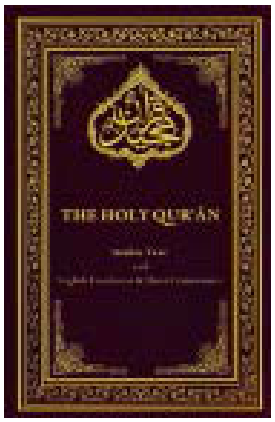
Claim of Divine Protection

In his statement before King Agrippa, Paul has mentioned one extra point which is not mentioned by Luke in his three statements. He claimed that the Lord has appointed him for a great task. He shall face great opposition and his enemies will try to kill him, but the Lord shall protect him against all these machinations. The Lord promised him protection. He said, "I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles" (Acts 26: 17) In the Living Bible, this verse has been translated as, "I will protect you from both your own people and the Gentiles."

Paul's claim of Divine protection did not come true. His end was very tragic and he suffered an unnatural death at the hands of the Gentiles about whom he claimed that had divinely been assigned to convert to Christianity. The Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia writes under the entry regarding Saint Paul: "In Jerusalem (A.D. 57) he was arrested for provoking a riot and imprisoned two years before being sent to Rome, where he was again imprisoned (A.D. 60-62) before being cleared off all charges. He was apparently martyred in the prosecution under Nero, traditionally by beheading."

As we have stated earlier, Paul claimed to see "visions" and receive revelations from the Lord about which Bible clearly mentions, "But a Prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a Prophet[sa] who speaks in the name of other Gods, must be put to death." (Deut. 18:20)

No doubt, Paul suffered at the hands of both the Jews and Gentiles, and in the end, met an unnatural death which is meant for those who fabricate lies in the name of Almighty God. His claim of Divine protection did not prove true.



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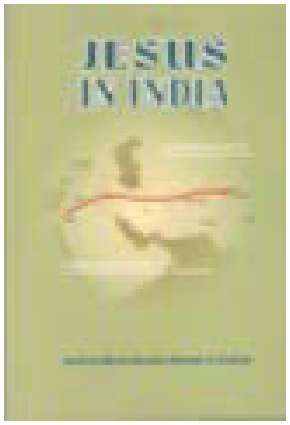


East Coast Qur'an Conference 2018

By the grace of Allah, East Coast Qur'an Conference 2018 organized by the Department of Taleem-ul-Qur'an and Waqf-e-Ardi, Ahmadiyya Community USA, was held on April 7-8, 2018 at Bait-ur-Rahman, MD. An estimated 1,300+ Jamaat members from all auxiliaries including Lajna, Ansar, Khuddam, Atfal and Nasirat attended this vibrant and educational conference. The 20 minute presentations, question and answer sessions, workshop on Surah Luqman, Jeopardy Quiz and children's program focused on various aspects of the Holy Qur'an.

Main Session - Day 1

The first session featured **introductory remarks** from Secretary Ta'leem-ul-Qur'an and Waqf-e-Ardi USA, Dr. Zaheeruddin Mansoor Ahmad Sahib and presentations by a wonderful panel. Dr. Zia Shah Sahib, gave a powerful presentation on the **human consciousness and soul and the Holy Qur'an**, linking the medical and philosophical sciences with the passages from the Holy Qur'an. Ahmad Mubarak Sahib spoke on **the philosophy behind the revelation of the Holy Qur'an** that highlighted the need for The Book and how the sequencing of revelations based on its textual context was and is relevant even today. This was followed with a speech by Nasirullah Ahmad Sahib on **the Promised Messiah's (as) love of the Holy Qur'an**.

A Q&A panel, hosted by Haris Raja Sahib, was held with all the presenters of the session and many probing questions were asked by the audience. Finally, Sheikh Abdul Hadi Sahib, National Secretary Ta'leem-ul-Qur'an and Waqf-e-Ardi Canada, gave his concluding address and led the attendees in silent prayer.

After Lunch and Zuhr Prayer break, second session was presided over by Al-Haj Jalaluddin Latif Sahib. After recitation of the Holy Qur'an, a workshop on Surah Luqman was held, led by Imam Faran Rabbani

Sahib, Imam Rizwan Khan Sahib, Mahmood Ahmad Sahib and Dr. Khalil Malik Sahib.
Each group covered a subject area, through brain storming, that was directly related to Surah Luqman. The workshop topics were **Salat and Patience, Humility vs. Pride, Parental rights and Shirk**.

Subsequently, Imam Azam Akram Sahib spoke on the topic of **guidance about combating crisis in life in the light of the Holy Qur'an.** Then, Dr. Col. Fazal Ahmed Sahib gave a presentation on **the Holy Quran, law and society** which explained how the Holy Qur'an gives a logical perspective to the societal laws and how the civilized world is implementing the same laws without knowing its actual source. Jalaluddin Latif Sahib shared concluding remarks, followed by Asr and tea break.

Session 2 ended after a very interesting, fiercely competitive, Jeopardy Quiz conducted by Haris Raja Sahib where 2 teams each, from Lajna and men participated. Lajna team A won by a huge margin. The day ended with Salatul Maghrib, Isha and dinner.

Main Session - Day 2

In the concluding session Imam Rizwan Khan Sahib spoke on the topic **earning the Halal way,** with examples of how to avoid haram in this society that thrives on it. This was followed by a presentation by Qasim Rashid Sahib on **How to preach in America with Qur'an**. Later, Ahmad Mubarak Sahib hosted a Q&A panel consisting of Imam Azhar Haneef Sahib , Imam Rizwan Khan Sahib and Qasim Rashid Sahib.

After the Q&A session, Dr. Hameed Mirza Sahib, National Secretary Talim Canada, shared his views and observations followed by a year-long activity report by Dr. Zaheeruddin Mansoor Ahmad Sahib, National Secretary Ta'leem-ul-Qur'an and Waqf-e-Ardhi. In conclusion, Imam Azhar Haneef Sahib closed the final session and the conference with silent prayers.

Lajna Session

Lessons Learned from Surah Luqman

By the grace of Allah, the Lajna Program at the East Coast Qur'an Conference 2018 took place on Sat. April 7th 2018 from 3 to 5pm. Respected Sadr Lajna Imaillah, Saliha Malik, presided over the event, which included several insightful activities focusing on Surah Luqman. The program began with small group discussions on specific verses from Surah Luqman that cause us to reflect on our behaviors and practices; as parent and child. Next, a panel of speakers responded to some of the contemporary advice imparted by Hadhrat Luqman (as) to his son, addressing the following topics:

- Abstaining from shirk
- Give thanks to and be kind to your parents
- Observing prayer
- Practicing humility and moderation
- Enjoining good and forbidding evil

- Steadfastness and patience

The panel was followed by a poetry session in praise of the Glorious Qur'an, recited in different languages, solo and united chorus. The Lajna Program ended with concluding remarks from Respected Sadr Lajna Imaillah and silent prayer.

Children's Session

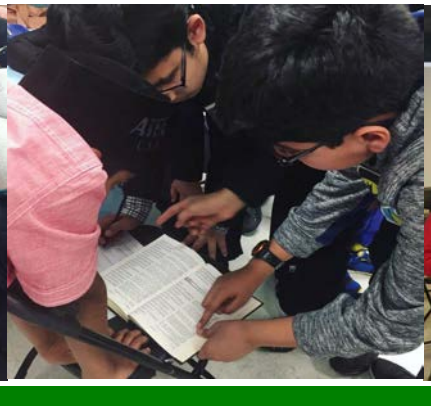
Al-Humdu Lillah, 120 Nasirat and 70 Atfal participated in Interactive sessions and different activities designed for Nasirat and Atfal on Saturday April 7th and Sunday April 8th.

Competitions of recitation and memorization for all three levels of Nasirat and Atfal were held on Saturday April 7th. 63 Nasirat took part in the recitation of Holy Qur'an Competition for all three age categories. Similarly, 48 Nasirat participated in the memorization of the Holy Qur'an competition in all three levels.

A very informative presentation called "The Holy Qur'an: Source of Knowledge" was held at the Nasirat side on Saturday and Atfal side on Sunday. Around 80 Nasirat took part in this interactive presentation.

Engaging age appropriate activities like Holy Qur'an Relay, Minute to Win, Holy Qur'an Logic Puzzles and a workshop on the topic of "Why do I love the Holy Qur'an?" were conducted during this Qur'an Conference. Same activities were held for both Atfal and Nasirat. Children from both auxiliaries felt involved and showed interest in all the activities.

On Sunday, a very informative and interesting session with Imam Azam Akram Sahib was held. 100 Nasirat and Atfal, with some teachers and volunteers, attended this hour and a half session. Chocolates and certificates were distributed among all the children who participated in this event on both days.



Memorization

Memorization

Memorization

Recitation

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"THE BEST AMONG YOU IS THE ONE WHO LEARNS THE QUR'AN AND TEACHES IT"
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PRESENTATION
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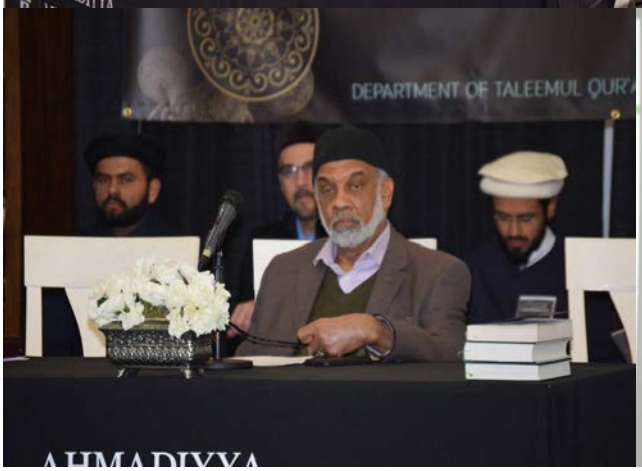
DEPARTMENT OF TALEEMUL QUR'A
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Why Recite Qur'an daily?

Ali Kahloon, Baltimore

"Verily, I am leaving among you two weighty (very important) things. You will not go astray after me as long as you adhere to them. One is greater than the other is; the Book of Allah and my household. They will never separate from one another until they shall come to me at the Pond (in Paradise)" These are the words of our beloved Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). He is imploring us to make the Holy Qur'an an integral part of our daily lives for our own sake.

Our lives revolve around busy schedules and agendas. We live in a age of planners, calendars, and gadgets that are filled with alerts for tasks and responsibilities. How many of us can say that we have daily Quran recitation reminders in these planners? We often prioritize worldly affairs and neglect to fulfill our responsibilities towards the Qur'an. If we truly knew the benefits of reciting the Qur'an daily, our planners would be filled with reminders.

There are tremendous benefits and blessings that emanate from making the Qur'an a constant part of our lives. First and foremost, it is a basic obligation as a Muslim. By reading and reflecting over the Qur'an, one fulfills an obligation and is rewarded for that. The Qur'an then becomes a proof for us on the Day of Judgment! Growing up as a Muslim teen and now adult, I was constantly reminded that whoever recites a verse from the Quran, ten good deeds will be written for them and ten bad deeds will be written off. Thus, I made it a habit to recite even a verse before I left the house. I can see and feel the blessings of that one verse recited manifest itself in the rigors of my day. The hardships were diminished and Allah created pathways and provided me with a clear direction in difficult situations.

'Hadrat A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, relates that the Holy Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: "Verily the one who recites the Qur'an beautifully, smoothly, and precisely, he will be in the company of the noble and obedient angels. And as for the one who recites with difficulty, stammering or stumbling through its verses, then he will have TWICE that reward." [Bukhari and Muslim]

Reciting Qur'an on a daily basis also has many extensive and long term benefits as well, such as being safeguarded against certain diseases and the torment of the grave. Increased sustenance, relieving of pain, happiness, reward of a martyr, forgiveness of sins, safety, and entering paradise are other benefits. But of course, in the age of day-to-day planning, we are not mindful of the greater picture. We seem to get lost in short term struggles and issues.

The bigger picture is the Day of Judgement when only our deeds will talk for us. The Holy Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: "The Qur'an is an intercessor, something given permission to intercede, and it is rightfully believed in. Whoever puts it in front of him, it will lead him to Paradise; whoever puts it behind him, it will steer him to the Hellfire." If that fear reigned in all of our hearts, our lives would be very different, our days would start and end with the recitation of the Qur'an.

The Holy Quran says regarding this, "Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and rending asunder by the fear of Allah." Surah Al-Hashr (59:21).

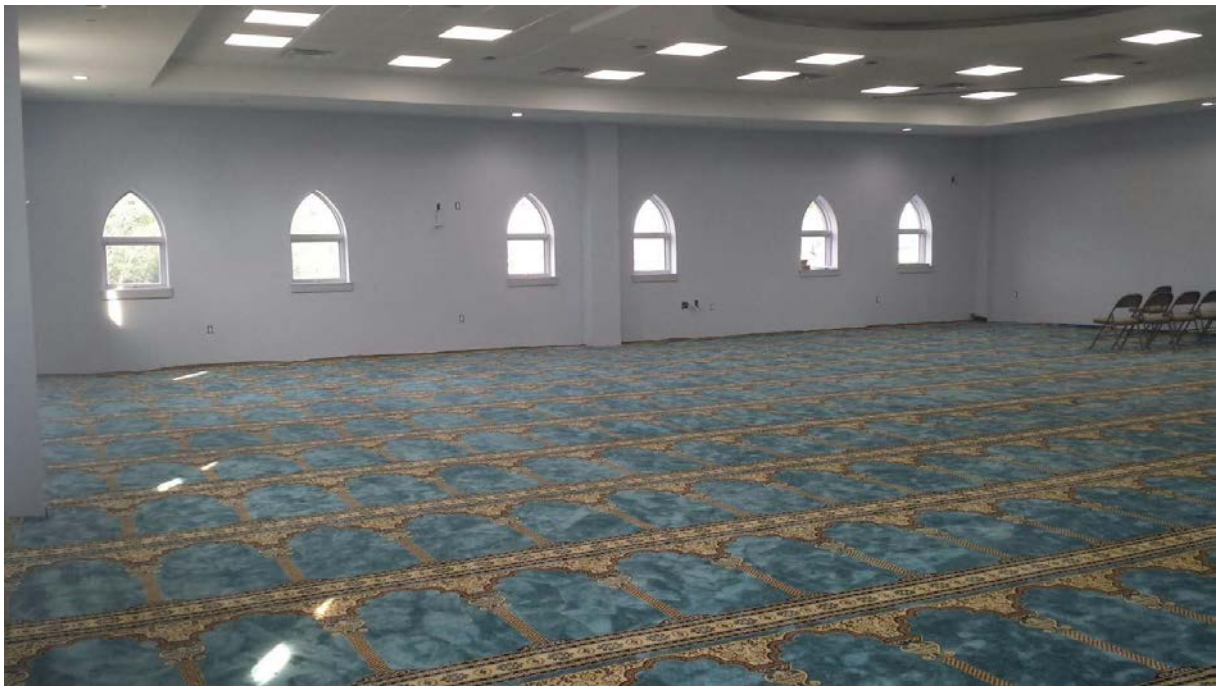
The Promised Messiah (a.s.) on the Qur'an

"It is not difficult for a reasonable and just person to understand that the purpose of a Book of God is to lead people to God, and to make them believe in Him as a certainty, and to stop them from committing sin by impressing the majesty and awe of God upon their hearts. Of what use is a book that cannot cleanse a heart, nor can bestow such pure and perfect understanding as should make one hate sin. The attraction of sin is a dangerous leprosy that cannot be healed till the manifestations of the living understanding of God, and the signs of His awe and greatness and power, descend like rain and till a person perceives God with His terrible powers as a goat perceives a tiger that is only two steps away from it. Man needs to be freed from the fatal passion of sin. The greatness of God should so occupy his heart that it should rid him of the overpowering desire of passion that falls upon him like lightning and instantly consumes his store of righteousness. Those impure passions which attack repeatedly like epilepsy and destroy all sense of piety cannot be wiped out by a self-conceived impression of God, nor can they be suppressed by one's own thinking, or be blocked by an atonement whose suffering has not been experienced by one. This is not a matter of indifference but, in the estimation of a wise person, it is worthy of consideration above all else as to how he might safeguard himself against the ruin which confronts him on account of his daring and his lack of relationship with God, the root of which is sin and disobedience.

It is obvious that a person cannot give up a certain pleasure for the sake of conjecture. It is only a certainty that can rescue one from another certainty. For instance, if we are certain that there are a number of deer in a forest that we can easily catch, we are incited by that certainty to enter the forest for that purpose; but if we are also certain that there are half a hundred lions in the forest and thousands of pythons, we would be dissuaded from making the attempt. Thus sin cannot be avoided without this degree of certainty. It is only iron that can break iron. There should be that certainty of the greatness and awe of God which should tear up the curtains of heedlessness, and should make the body tremble, and should make death appear near. The heart should be so overcome by fear that all relationship with the sinful ego should be cut asunder and one should be drawn by hidden hands towards God and the heart should be filled with certainty that God Who is truly present does not leave a daring offender without punishment. What shall a seeker after true purity do with a book that does not fill this need?

I wish to convey it to everyone that the Holy Qur'an is the Book that fills all these needs. Through it a person is drawn to God and his heart grows cold to the love of the world. By following it, God, Who is hidden beyond hidden, in the end manifests Himself and displays those powers of which outsiders have no notion, and informs of His existence by the affirmation: I am present."

The Essence of Islam: Volume I, Page 351

Outreach stall organized by Bay Point CA chapter

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